

COMMITTEE ON AGING

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CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON AGING

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June 21, 2018  
Start: 10:08 a.m.  
Recess: 12:09 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: MARGARET S. CHIN  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

DIANA AYALA  
CHAIM M. DEUTSCH  
RUBEN DIAZ, SR.  
DANIEL DROMM  
MATHIEU EUGENE  
DEBORAH L. ROSE  
MARK TREYGER  
PAUL A. VALLONE  
HELEN K. ROSENTHAL  
JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS

## A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

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2  
3  
4 Donna Corrado  
5 Commissioner for the New York City Department for  
6 The Aging, DFTA

7  
8 Michael Bosnick  
9 Deputy Commissioner of the Planning and  
10 Technology Division at the New York City  
11 Department for the Aging, DFTA

12  
13 Sasha Fishmon  
14 Associate Commissioner for Fiscal Operations for  
15 The New York City Department for the Aging, DFTA

16  
17 Michelle Jackson  
18 Deputy Director and General Counsel for the Human  
19 Services Council of New York, HSC

20  
21 Andrea Cianfrani  
22 Director of Public Policy at Live on New York

23  
24 Kevin Douglas  
25 Co-Director of Policy and Advocacy at United  
Neighborhood Houses of New York, UNH

Chris Widelo  
Associate State Director for AARP

Katie Foley  
Director of Public Affairs at SelfHelp Community  
Services

Po Ling Ng  
Director of Open Door Senior Center

Jonah Gensler  
Associate Executive Director for Sunnyside  
Community Services

Aaron Rooney  
Clinical Director at Stanley Isaacs Neighborhood  
Center

Ariel Savransky  
Advocacy and Policy Advisor at UJA Federation of  
New York

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Rachel Sherrow  
Associate Executive Director at Citymeals on  
Wheels

Carlyn Cowen  
Chief Policy and Public Affairs Officer at the  
Chinese American Planning Council

Jeanette Estima  
Senior Policy Analyst at FPWA

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[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Good morning.

[off mic dialogue]

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Wow, it's great to see a big crowd here today. I thought it was pretty loud.

Good morning and welcome. I am Council Member

Margaret Chin, Chair of the Committee on Aging. Thank

you all for joining us today for the Committee's

oversight hearing on senior center model budgets.

Senior centers funded by the Department of the Aging

also known as DFTA serve almost 30,000 seniors daily

at 249 different sites. These senior centers play a

vital role in the aging community, they provide

seniors with meals, activities, health management

resources, educational programming and socialization.

According to the National Council on Aging, seniors

who attend senior centers experience improvements in

their social, mental, and economic wellbeing. Studies

also show that seniors who attend senior centers can

learn to manage and even postpone the beginning of

chronic illness. Simply put senior centers provide a

host of benefits for our aging population thus it is

important that they receive the funding necessary to

properly provide these services. Unfortunately,

1 funding disparities exist across the city's senior  
2 centers. Different senior centers receive different  
3 amounts of funding and are reimbursed at different  
4 rates. Though the reason why it's often unclear to  
5 help address this inequity in funding, the city  
6 council successfully fought for an additional ten  
7 million dollars as part of the fiscal year 2018  
8 historic year of the senior's 23-million-dollar  
9 increase. DFTA and the Office of Management and  
10 Budget also known as OMB, worked together to create a  
11 model budget for senior centers to help DFTA allocate  
12 these additional funds. DFTA then compared each  
13 senior center's existing budgets to the model budget  
14 number to assess the senior center's need. Based on  
15 this assessment of need, DFTA allocated the ten  
16 million dollars for a total of 20 million to senior  
17 centers to be used for direct staff and programming  
18 needs. Since then DFTA has made a commitment to add  
19 an additional 10 million to senior center's budget by  
20 fiscal year 2021. Now the Committee now seeks to  
21 learn more about DFTA's model budget process. While  
22 the Committee applauds DFTA's work in developing its  
23 senior center model budget, we still have major  
24 concerns. After the release of the model budget,  
25

1  
2 senior centers directors were furious that the model  
3 budget did not take care of meals, meal preparation  
4 or kitchen staff. Many of their kitchen staff who  
5 work, who cook, and serve nutritious meals to  
6 hundreds of seniors everyday have not received a  
7 raise in years and will now have to watch as some of  
8 their colleagues receive one. Unfortunately, this  
9 sends a message to them that they are not seen as a  
10 valued member of the staff. Even though this  
11 administration had an opportunity to heed the  
12 concerns of the Directors on the ground in the next  
13 budget, it decided to ignore our requests to put a  
14 down payment on meal reimbursement. The Committee is  
15 also concerned that senior centers and advocates were  
16 not involved with the model budget development  
17 process. In fact, DFTA did not involve these  
18 individuals until about a month before the model  
19 budget was created. These important stakeholders  
20 could have served as an invaluable resource to DFTA.  
21 So, today we will hear from DFTA advocates and other  
22 interested stakeholders about the senior center model  
23 budget. The Committee seeks to learn about any other  
24 identifiable gaps in senior center funding that still  
25 exists after this model budget process and what must

1  
2 be done to help achieve parity between senior centers  
3 going forward. I'd like to thank the Committee Staff  
4 for their help in putting together this hearing; our  
5 Policy Analyst Kalima Johnson; our Counsel Nuzhat  
6 Chowdhury and Finance Analyst Daniel Kroop and  
7 Finance Unit Head Dohini Sompura and other members of  
8 the committee will be joining us soon. Now I would  
9 like to ask, ask our Counsel to administer the oath  
10 to our first panel, Commissioner welcome, Donna  
11 Corrado, we also have Sasha Fishmon, the Associate  
12 Commissioner for Fiscal Operations and Michael  
13 Bosnick, Deputy Commissioner for Planning and  
14 Technology. Thank you and welcome.

15 COMMITTEE CLERK CHOWDHURY: Please raise  
16 your right hand? Do you affirm to tell the truth, the  
17 whole truth and nothing but the truth in your  
18 testimony before this committee and to respond  
19 honestly to Council Member questions?

20 DONNA CORRADO: Yes.

21 MICHAEL BOSNICK: Yes.

22 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: We've also been joined  
23 by Council Member Rosenthal who's visiting us, thank  
24 you.

25

1  
2 DONNA CORRADO: Good morning Chairperson  
3 Chin, members of the Aging Committee, advocates,  
4 partners, friends and supporters and DFTA staff. I am  
5 Donna Corrado, Commissioner of the New York City  
6 Department for the Aging and I'm joined today by  
7 Michael Bosnick, Deputy Commissioner of the Division  
8 and Planning and Technology and Sasha Fishmon our  
9 Associate Commissioner for budget. I would like to  
10 thank, thank you for this opportunity to provide  
11 testimony on the topic of senior center model  
12 budgets. As I mentioned in recent testimony before  
13 this Committee during the Fiscal Year '19 preliminary  
14 and executive budget hearings and in line with the  
15 administration's broader vision of promoting fairness  
16 and equity, the administration has added ten million  
17 in new baselined funds to senior center portfolio  
18 starting in Fiscal Year '18 which will grow to 20  
19 million by Fiscal Year '21. This represents a  
20 significant investment in DFTA's senior center  
21 network. These funds were designated to help create  
22 parity in our senior center budgets and provide  
23 adequate funding to achieve and expand array.. an  
24 array of programming across the senior center system.  
25 DFTA and the Mayor's Office of Management and Budget,

1 will... with input from our network of providers and  
2 other stakeholders, conducted a thorough analysis of  
3 the existing line item budgets and spending patterns  
4 across our portfolio of 249 senior centers. As a  
5 result, we identified several characteristics that  
6 exemplify high quality programs, highlighting strong  
7 leadership and staff as well as a rich array of  
8 health and educational programming. We then compared  
9 existing budgets to the funding patterns that support  
10 the key attributes of a high-quality program and  
11 calculated the need for each center based on where  
12 their current budgets compared to this model. The key  
13 objective of the model budget has been to achieve a  
14 more equitable distribution of available funds among  
15 senior centers and to ensure every center has the  
16 funding they need to deliver high quality services.  
17 The model budget reflects that every center needs  
18 adequate funding to provide a threshold level of  
19 quality programming and to pay competitive wages to  
20 attract and retain high quality staff. The network of  
21 249 senior centers was divided into five groups based  
22 on average daily participants, in recognition of the  
23 fact that there are certain costs that vary based on  
24 the size of the center, such as the need for modestly  
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2 more staff to run a very large center compared to a  
3 very small one. At the same time the model accounts  
4 for certain fixed costs for running a center,  
5 irrespective of the average daily participants. The  
6 resulting amounts given to each center were divided  
7 between an amount for program staff and another for  
8 programming, based on each center's area of need.  
9 However, funding remained flexible across line items,  
10 within certain parameters; thus, allowing centers to  
11 identify their most critical needs and to submit  
12 proposals to DFTA accordingly. In March, 223 senior  
13 centers were notified of the amounts they will  
14 receive for both Fiscal Year '18 and Fiscal Year '19.  
15 All of the centers receiving this funding have  
16 submitted their proposals for use of the funds and  
17 the contract amendment process is well underway.  
18 Depending on individual urgent needs, a number of  
19 centers proposed to allocate a portion of their model  
20 budget funds for purposes outside of the prescribed  
21 model. DFTA assessed each of these requests on an  
22 individual basis to ensure providers had flexibility  
23 while still meeting the ultimate objectives of the  
24 model. Centers were also permitted to propose one  
25 time needs for the Fiscal Year '18 allocation. This

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2 was a thorough, yearlong process in which many of our  
3 external partners played an important role.

4 Ultimately, we believe our mutual goal of equity was  
5 met and that the model budget funding will enhance  
6 the quality of our senior center programming. We are  
7 confident in the soundness of our formula and  
8 processes and intend to implement a similar

9 methodology for future rightsizing efforts. For

10 instance, and as you know, the model does not address

11 food costs. We are currently in the process of

12 working on an evaluation of food services across all

13 programs. This work is being done with the help of a

14 consultant, and we anticipate this analysis will be

15 completed later this year. Our goal for the second

16 phase of the model is to evaluate how to achieve

17 efficiencies in food procurement, preparation and

18 delivery, while increasing quality and choice. I

19 thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony

20 on senior center model budgets. And my colleagues and

21 I are pleased to answer any questions you may have.

22 Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you Commissioner

24 and we also have been joined by Committee Member

25 Council Member Ayala, welcome. Commissioner in terms

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2 of the model budget in a, a 2017 union settlement  
3 analysis found few disparities in New York City  
4 senior center of funding. In fact, their analysis  
5 found that in FY '16 a senior center in Midwood,  
6 Brooklyn received about \$5.32 for each senior  
7 participant per day while a center in Jamaica, Queens  
8 received about \$50.31 for each senior participant per  
9 day so for the record can DFTA explain why such a  
10 funding disparity exists and then prior to the  
11 adoption of the senior center model budget had DFTA  
12 made any attempts to address funding disparity across  
13 senior centers?

14 DONNA CORRADO: So, this whole exercise  
15 was, was about remediating that long-term inequity in  
16 senior center funding. Now there... you know there are  
17 historical reasons why that happened, the most  
18 evident one was through the RFP process we set  
19 certain threshold funding and then people and, and  
20 sponsors proposed a certain amount for, for funding  
21 and it was either approved or not approved but more  
22 importantly there were a number of centers that were  
23 not funded by DFTA through the RFP process and then  
24 subsequently a council member would fund the center  
25 at a very low rate and then they would be baselined

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2 late... in later years by DFTA really just exacerbating  
3 the problem. So, this was an attempt to look at  
4 senior centers across the board, everybody we... you  
5 know we've always had the same expectations whether a  
6 center was well funded or over funded or, or not  
7 funded entirely so with those expectations it, it  
8 stands to reason that they should be adequately  
9 funding if we're going to hold them to the same  
10 accountability and have the same expectations. So,  
11 this whole exercise was about really correcting that  
12 long-term inequity.

13 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yeah, I know that in  
14 the last... definitely since the last session the  
15 council was able to supplement a lot of the senior  
16 centers who either over serve or they just didn't  
17 have enough budget and hopefully with the model  
18 budget funding... [cross-talk]

19 DONNA CORRADO: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

20 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: ...that the council  
21 don't have to pick up what we call the senior center  
22 enhancement.

23 DONNA CORRADO: So, so the, the, the  
24 senior center model budget provides a threshold of  
25 funding this... and the council monies that are added

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2 to that what we... known as discretionary allocations  
3 provide enhancements above and beyond that. So, it  
4 was never meant to supplant what council was doing  
5 and if council continues to fund those enhancements  
6 then more programming and more enrichment will be had  
7 by the seniors, but it certainly was not meant to  
8 supplant it.

9 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Well I don't think we  
10 wanted to... [cross-talk]

11 DONNA CORRADO: In theory... [cross-talk]

12 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: ...keep funding it,  
13 alright, it should be core... those are core services  
14 that we really feel that is the administration,  
15 DFTA's responsibility and we're going to continue to  
16 keep advocating for more because right now the budget  
17 for DFTA for our senior is still less than half a  
18 percent of the city's budget and we were hoping to  
19 get up at least to one but we're still only at half  
20 so we're not done. In your, your model budget I know  
21 that in the fiscal year, the... in the preliminary  
22 budget hearing we did ask for the formula and so we  
23 saw that you broke it down to five groups but why is  
24 there such a, a disparity, a gap between, you know  
25 from one group to the other like the first block the,

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2 the difference was like 10,000 but then between the  
3 first and the second the difference was like 48...  
4 [cross-talk]

5 DONNA CORRADO: Right... [cross-talk]

6 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: ...thousand?

7 DONNA CORRADO: So, Michael our Deputy  
8 Commissioner is going to answer that question because  
9 he really got into the leads in terms of how they  
10 would stratify it in different categories, but it was  
11 essentially based on average daily participants, but  
12 Michael can elaborate on that.

13 MICHAEL BOSNICK: Correct, as you  
14 mentioned we have five different categories based on  
15 average daily participants. The middle category is  
16 the large category because most of our centers in  
17 terms of average daily participants group in an  
18 average size, a medium sized center so that... the  
19 centers that are the largest centers and the very  
20 smallest centers are small numbers of centers in each  
21 of those groups because they're kind of outliers in  
22 terms of our typical centers. I did want to ask for  
23 clarification when you mentioned 10,000 and 40,000 I  
24 wasn't sure what you were referring to.

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2 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: That's from your  
3 recommended total for direct staff and programming,  
4 the first block was 195,424 and then the second block  
5 was 205,576 so between...

6 [off mic dialogue]

7 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yeah, the difference  
8 from the, the different blocks.

9 MICHAEL BOSNICK: Oh, for the average  
10 size of the budget.

11 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yeah.

12 MICHAEL BOSNICK: It was... right and that  
13 is based on average daily participants, we... the  
14 largest centers as I mentioned what we call block  
15 five, the largest group there are only 12 of those  
16 centers so they are just major outliers that for the  
17 reasons that the Commissioner mentioned historically  
18 have gotten very, very larger amounts of funding  
19 compared to other centers be... and they do have large  
20 numbers of participants showing up each day so that  
21 accounts for the difference between the amount of  
22 baseline budget needed for the largest group compared  
23 to the other groups. We tested to see that the  
24 outlying large centers and small centers were not out  
25 of range when you look at how much money is available

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2 per participant by standardizing the model to look at  
3 how many dollars are being given to a center to  
4 support each participant who's coming in, we felt  
5 that that was a good basic measure to look at  
6 variation from one center to another and when you  
7 control for the size of... for the number of people  
8 showing up each day you'll see that those disparities  
9 in average dollars per participant grows smaller and  
10 in fact if you look at the largest centers they have  
11 fewer dollars per participant on average simply  
12 because you have various economies of scale. So,  
13 anyway once you go... get beyond the raw dollars to  
14 look at dollars per participant there... you see  
15 clustering in terms of how we're allocating dollars  
16 from one center... between centers.

17 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: But it... in, in this...  
18 the model budget, I mean I think most of the centers  
19 were very happy because they got extra money... [cross-  
20 talk]

21 MICHAEL BOSNICK: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

22 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: ...but there was a  
23 group, I think about 20 something and most of them  
24 were large centers they didn't get a dime...

25 MICHAEL BOSNICK: Uh-huh...

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2 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: And they were not  
3 happy...

4 MICHAEL BOSNICK: Uh-huh...

5 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: And these are the  
6 centers that serve a large population.

7 DONNA CORRADO: So, there's, there's no  
8 doubt that, you know we have a number of centers that  
9 we consider outliers that are serving an  
10 extraordinary number of people and much of their... to  
11 begin with they have very wonderful advocates so they  
12 have a robust budget to begin with but they did not  
13 get additional monies and that's unfortunate because  
14 most of their costs are associated with food because  
15 that is really... you know they're serving so many  
16 people so that is something that we've looked at  
17 individually and we'll be addressing but it was not  
18 part of the model senior center exercise but it's  
19 something that we're aware of and something that we  
20 will work to, to help, help these centers but it  
21 cannot be, you know in... and in, in all fairness it  
22 was not part of the model budget exercise so it's not  
23 part of this budget amendment but we do have to  
24 acknowledge that, you know centers that over serve  
25 and where we can help fund them for the over serving

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2 we will do that and we have done that in the past and  
3 we'll continue to advocate on their behalf.

4 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So, how... so, when...  
5 DFTA when... you mentioned over serve so what is your...  
6 how do you... what are you... your definition of over  
7 serve, what do you consider... [cross-talk]

8 DONNA CORRADO: So, if we for example  
9 have a contract to serve 500,000 meals and that's  
10 with DFTA's... you know baseline funding is for 500,000  
11 meals and they're serving 750,000 we need to cover  
12 their food costs so, where we can do that we do and  
13 we try very hard come the end of the fiscal year to  
14 either add additional money to the budget to move  
15 money around with accruals to cover the cost of that  
16 food because they're over served so it's on an  
17 individual contractual basis but there are certain  
18 centers and certain communities that are, are  
19 overflowing.

20 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Well that's why the  
21 council we asked the administration for this year's  
22 budget... [cross-talk]

23 DONNA CORRADO: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

24 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: ...to at least put in  
25 11.6 million dollars to help supplement the food cost

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2 and we call that universal free lunch for seniors  
3 because seniors have to... they ask to make a  
4 contribution, right, but in all of the centers that I  
5 visited the first line that you have to cross is to  
6 pay for the lunch to get your ticket and I just got  
7 something in the e-mail that one of my centers is  
8 raising the cost from \$1.50 to two dollars.

9 DONNA CORRADO: Well that's a bargain  
10 because in San Francisco they ask for five dollars of  
11 contribution... [cross-talk]

12 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Well that's San  
13 Francisco... [cross-talk]

14 DONNA CORRADO: You know and... [cross-  
15 talk]

16 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: ...we're in New York  
17 City... [cross-talk]

18 DONNA CORRADO: ...for the most... for the  
19 most part, you know in all fairness and we may agree  
20 to disagree there are a number of centers and I'll  
21 acknowledge that where it really is a burden for a  
22 senior to give a contribution and we acknowledge that  
23 and we know where those centers are but for the most  
24 part and even in low income areas and I keep saying  
25 this, they're the most generous and they contribute

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2 the most and in some areas with a, you know very high  
3 capita they're less generous for a contribution but  
4 the contribution number one is required through the  
5 older Americans Act, we have no choice but to ask for  
6 a contribution and we should be doing that in a way  
7 that's, you know respects the person's dignity and  
8 anonymity and I know we need to do a better job of  
9 that and we've reminded program offices, we just went  
10 through this exercise about how they need to instruct  
11 programs to make sure that no one is being coerced in  
12 giving a contribution but the contribution in fact is  
13 a very important piece and, and for the most part  
14 seniors do want to contribute to the cost of their  
15 meal so other than for those seniors who are  
16 absolutely impoverished and suffering from food  
17 insecurity they, they really do want to contribute  
18 whether it's 50 cents, whether it's a dollar or a  
19 \$1.50 so we need to collect that money so it.. and it  
20 also offsets the cost of the meal so there's a  
21 variation, you know and it varies from center to  
22 center but I do agree that the centers need to be  
23 more conscious of respecting the person's dignity and  
24 making sure that they're not coerced because everyone  
25 is entitled to a meal so universal free lunch is

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2 already in existence in, in essence and they can  
3 contribute or not contribute, no one really knows and  
4 we, we need to maintain the anonymity but it is  
5 important for most people to contribute something.

6 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yeah, we agree but the  
7 way it is set up a lot of the centers they have to  
8 collect that money to supplement their food budget..  
9 [cross-talk]

10 DONNA CORRADO: They do.. [cross-talk]

11 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: ...and they're asked by  
12 DFTA and if the money goes down they have to be  
13 accountable to DFTA, DFTA says well why.. how come  
14 you're not collecting as much contribution so I think  
15 that has to change, we can ask seniors to contribute  
16 in a way that they feel comfortable in doing.. [cross-  
17 talk]

18 DONNA CORRADO: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

19 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: ...it but right now for  
20 a lot of centers it's the minute you walk in the door  
21 and that's why we wanted to really help offset the  
22 cost of meal increase by asking the administration to  
23 put in the money for this year's budget and you know  
24 at the last minute they.. right before we voted on the  
25

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2 budget they gave us 2.8 million for home delivered  
3 meals...

4 DONNA CORRADO: Right...

5 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: I'm grateful for that  
6 but we asked for four and there's still 7.6 that  
7 we've asked for, for the congregate meal and we're  
8 going to have to keep pushing for it because the  
9 model budget did not take care of the food... [cross-  
10 talk]

11 DONNA CORRADO: Right... [cross-talk]

12 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: ...so that is something  
13 that... you know when OMB tells me oh, it's going to be  
14 taken care of in the model budget, well you didn't  
15 take care of it...

16 DONNA CORRADO: Well if they told you it  
17 was going to be taken care of in the model budget I  
18 think that that was factually incorrect but we are  
19 being taken care of in this phase two of this model  
20 budget process in this whole looking at food service  
21 in general and coming up with ways that we can  
22 increase the quality, the quantity and also the, the  
23 amount of choice and accountability and part of that  
24 is how we collect contributions, how we order food

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2 and we can use some modern technologies to help  
3 advance that.

4 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So, how soon will you  
5 be able to finish that study or... [cross-talk]

6 DONNA CORRADO: The... that... this study is,  
7 is ongoing and it will be... hopefully be finished by  
8 the end of the calendar year.

9 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: End of the calendar...  
10 [cross-talk]

11 DONNA CORRADO: Calendar year, which is...  
12 [cross-talk]

13 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: ...end of this year...  
14 [cross-talk]

15 DONNA CORRADO: ...by the first of the  
16 year, yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: I'm not sure I'm going  
18 to believe you Commissioner maybe it's not DFTA but  
19 even with OMB they drag their feet on this model  
20 budget and it... [cross-talk]

21 DONNA CORRADO: So, it's, it's... [cross-  
22 talk]

23 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: It's almost the end of  
24 the fiscal year that... [cross-talk]

25 DONNA CORRADO: It's... [cross-talk]

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2 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: ...the centers were  
3 getting their money... [cross-talk]

4 DONNA CORRADO: ...it's a work... it's a work  
5 in progress but it is being done.

6 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: We're going to keep on  
7 pushing but I'm going ask my colleague to ask some  
8 questions and then I'll, I'll come back.

9 DONNA CORRADO: Sure.

10 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Council Member  
11 Rosenthal.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you.  
13 Thank you, Commissioner, and to your staff for doing  
14 this work. I, I'm not as involved as the Chair of  
15 Aging, City Council Member Chin is so these might be  
16 some questions just to catch me up to what's going on  
17 but I'm wondering first of all if when you did the  
18 model budgeting if you felt... what was the... if you  
19 felt constrained by the ten million dollar  
20 allocation, another words when you did the model  
21 budgeting what was the total need and did it land  
22 over ten million and then I'm going to ask you is  
23 that the reason why you took out the cost of food?

24 DONNA CORRADO: We took out the cost of  
25 food because we were doing that as a separate

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2 exercise and we didn't want it to muddy the water and  
3 we're really concentrating on improving the  
4 programming based on evidence based programming that  
5 we wanted every center to have so that we can achieve  
6 certain outcomes and also we wanted to be able to  
7 recruit and retain staff so that was our priorities  
8 phase one, that's not to say that the... you know that  
9 we don't need to address the whole food issue, we do,  
10 it's a separate exercise and we just didn't want to  
11 muddy the water and it was a good start. Do you want  
12 to expand on that?

13 MICHAEL BOSNICK: Should I expand on it?

14 DONNA CORRADO: Yeah.

15 MICHAEL BOSNICK: Right, as the  
16 Commissioner said in order to make sure that... [cross-  
17 talk]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So, I'm sorry  
19 to interrupt...

20 MICHAEL BOSNICK: Uh-huh...

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So, what's the  
22 total need, when you did the analysis with the... you  
23 know for, for a model budget what, what did the total  
24 need come to?

25

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2 DONNA CORRADO: It came to 21 million  
3 less whatever the food cost thing is.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: 21 million...  
5 [cross-talk]

6 DONNA CORRADO: Right... [cross-talk]

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...less... [cross-  
8 talk]

9 DONNA CORRADO: ...which will be phased in  
10 over a period of time.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Sorry, just  
12 stay with me, it's early in the morning, I had a five  
13 a.m. wake up call this morning. So, you did the model  
14 budgeting to do the experiential better budget,  
15 added... [cross-talk]

16 DONNA CORRADO: Correct... [cross-talk]

17 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...up the  
18 difference between how much money they get now and  
19 what the new cost would be and the, the delta between  
20 those two numbers not including food was how much  
21 annually?

22 DONNA CORRADO: 21 million... [cross-talk]

23 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: 21 million  
24 which is magically very close to the 20 million  
25 dollars that you have been allocated annually, just

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2 noting that and then for the wage differences, in  
3 order to hire experienced people does that involve  
4 contract negotiations at all or are these all through  
5 the CBO just the choice of the Director as to how  
6 much to pay people?

7 DONNA CORRADO: So, some agencies do have  
8 collective bargaining most of them do not and we put  
9 in enough so that they can do and have the  
10 flexibility to either raise their staff, give them  
11 raises or hire staff at a higher starting salary.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Are you  
13 assuming that across the city people with the same  
14 titles will be paid the same wages?

15 DONNA CORRADO: I'm not assuming anything  
16 because if you look at what the contract titles are,  
17 are very different from what the agency titles are  
18 but essentially within, within reason I think that  
19 the job functioning tasks are the same and that they  
20 should be basically more equitable.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So, in your  
22 doing the analysis did you equalize that?

23 DONNA CORRADO: We gave them enough money  
24 to pay salaries which we thought were fair, but we  
25 didn't target into a particular dollar amount because

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2 it's not collective bargaining and we don't control  
3 what sponsors pay their staff, we cannot do that and  
4 some of them do have collective bargaining issues so  
5 we're working that on a case by case basis.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yep and did  
7 you... could you identify for each of us Council  
8 Members the senior centers in our districts and how  
9 much more funding they got and what in your... in, in  
10 doing the model budgeting what that was intended to  
11 cover whether it be programs that weren't provided or  
12 some sort of staff allocation... [cross-talk]

13 DONNA CORRADO: Yes, we do have... [cross-  
14 talk]

15 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...or... [cross-  
16 talk]

17 DONNA CORRADO: ...that level of, of  
18 analysis and we'll be able to meet with you.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: You have that?

20 DONNA CORRADO: Yes, we do... [cross-talk]

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: The city has  
22 it, and did you do in that analysis any thought... any  
23 thinking about the food costs at all or is that an  
24 analysis you haven't done yet?

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2 DONNA CORRADO: It's an analysis that  
3 we're in the process of doing but no, it is not  
4 included in the model senior center exercise, no.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: The reason I  
6 say that is because we can talk about it as an  
7 existential exercise but at some point, it turns into  
8 money in the budget and I'm wondering if when you  
9 plan to know what that cost would be, so we can all  
10 get engaged with you to make sure those costs are  
11 covered.

12 DONNA CORRADO: So, we are in the process  
13 of doing that and we hope by the end of the calendar  
14 year that we will know better what that cost is and  
15 how also we can realize more efficiencies to offset  
16 that cost and then what, what the difference will be.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I'm sorry?

18 DONNA CORRADO: So... [cross-talk]

19 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: You're  
20 looking... [cross-talk]

21 DONNA CORRADO: ...what the cost... [cross-  
22 talk]

23 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...for  
24 efficiencies... [cross-talk]

25 DONNA CORRADO: ...would be... [cross-talk]

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...that may  
3 offset the, the cost of the actual cost of food for  
4 people... [cross-talk]

5 DONNA CORRADO: Of, of food service,  
6 we're looking at it in totality, we're not just  
7 looking at the food service workers, what their... what  
8 their hourly rate is of course, we're looking on how  
9 we can modernize food service delivery all together  
10 so it's a... it's a much more comprehensive exercise  
11 than just looking at what to pay the food service  
12 staff.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Got it so when  
14 you did the model budgeting you took out the entire  
15 kitchen portion; staffing, the cost of food?

16 DONNA CORRADO: We took out the cost of  
17 raw food and catering and we did not account for an  
18 increase for the food service staff.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: And when... as...  
20 [cross-talk]

21 DONNA CORRADO: Correct... [cross-talk]

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...you're  
23 thinking about it now are you making accommodations  
24 for religious differences, for example centers that  
25 serve all kosher meals?

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2 DONNA CORRADO: Our intention is to  
3 expand the number of choices and the mechanism by  
4 which we serve food so it's more... basically more  
5 choice, more accountability and a better experience  
6 for the consumer.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So, with all  
8 due respect I think what I'm saying is and I  
9 appreciate the, the customer centric language for  
10 sure but for example I have a, a senior center in my  
11 district that only serves kosher meals and therefor  
12 requires certain accommodations in the kitchen, I'm  
13 not... I'm not sure they're looking for choice, they're  
14 looking for kosher meals 100 percent, is that  
15 something that would be accommodated?

16 DONNA CORRADO: So, we do have an, an  
17 accommodation for kosher meals as you know and, and  
18 they're reimbursed at a higher rate than a... than a  
19 non-kosher meal.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay, so...  
21 [cross-talk]

22 DONNA CORRADO: So, that's something that  
23 we've been doing historically for as long as I can  
24 remember.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay and then  
3 just specifically on your testimony you said in March  
4 223 senior centers were notified of the amounts they  
5 will receive, is that the total number... sorry, just  
6 a... I'm almost done, is that the total number of  
7 senior centers that exist or is that... [cross-talk]

8 DONNA CORRADO: No, that's, that's the,  
9 the number that will be getting an increase.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Would any be  
11 getting decreases?

12 DONNA CORRADO: No one is getting a  
13 decrease, some did not get anything because they were  
14 at or above the model senior center... [cross-talk]

15 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Got it and  
16 how... [cross-talk]

17 DONNA CORRADO: ...threshold... [cross-talk]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...many did that  
19 total?

20 DONNA CORRADO: What was that, 26, 26...

21 MICHAEL BOSNICK: 26.

22 DONNA CORRADO: 26 centers.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay. Alright,  
24 thank you very much, thank you Chair Chin.

25 DONNA CORRADO: You're very welcome.

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2 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you. So,  
3 Commissioner will we be able to see the funding  
4 associated with the food analysis to be included in  
5 the 2019 February financial plan?

6 DONNA CORRADO: That's, that's ambitious  
7 because as you know that's when we'll be presenting  
8 it to the administration and to OMB but I'm sure you  
9 can see a draft by then.

10 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Because we got to get  
11 the money included otherwise it's all talk because  
12 already the centers are suffering because they don't  
13 have money for the increased food cost and the  
14 administration didn't put in the money, I mean I hope  
15 they will because they... [cross-talk]

16 DONNA CORRADO: So, so I'm... [cross-talk]

17 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: ...took... they... [cross-  
18 talk]

19 DONNA CORRADO: ...I'm hoping that  
20 everybody gets a meal, and no one goes without so if  
21 there is an individual center that's not able to  
22 serve food or pay their food bill please see us  
23 because that should not happen.

24 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yeah, because they  
25 overserve or the... [cross-talk]

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2 DONNA CORRADO: Yes... [cross-talk]

3 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: ...meal cost... because  
4 that's why we put in the request in this fiscal  
5 year's budget... [cross-talk]

6 DONNA CORRADO: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

7 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: ...and somehow OMB  
8 didn't pay attention, didn't think it was serious but  
9 it's, it's real, I mean you have such a big gap  
10 between the meal costs, I mean we were very  
11 reasonable, we're talking about a dollar increase but  
12 they didn't heed the call so we want to make sure at  
13 least get it in the February plan and so that we can  
14 prepare for the next fiscal year's budget when you're  
15 ready to deal with the meal issue that the center is  
16 going to be fully funded.

17 DONNA CORRADO: You know I agree but then  
18 one begs to question why one center is paying \$5.35  
19 for a meal and another center from the same caterer  
20 serving the same meal is paying eight dollars so it  
21 requires further analysis in general and a further  
22 understanding of why those discrepancies are.

23 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: And if you need  
24 additional staff to help...

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2 DONNA CORRADO: We are... we're going with  
3 an outside consultant.

4 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So, that's... I mean we  
5 wanted to get the information as quickly as possible  
6 so that we can make sure that funding will be in  
7 place... [cross-talk]

8 DONNA CORRADO: Yes... [cross-talk]

9 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: ...by the next fiscal  
10 year budget.

11 DONNA CORRADO: I understand.

12 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you. Council  
13 Member Ayala, do you have a question?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: I do. Good morning  
15 Commissioner.

16 DONNA CORRADO: Good morning.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: I guess... my, my  
18 question is really around salary concerns that I have  
19 for the staff that work at these senior centers and  
20 you mentioned that that was considered as part of  
21 the, the, the formula you used to determine how much  
22 was going to be allocated to each senior center. When  
23 I worked in senior services we didn't see a cost of  
24 living adjustment for many years, I wonder... do you  
25

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2 know when was the last time that a cost of living  
3 adjustment was made for staff at the senior centers?

4 DONNA CORRADO: So, the cost of living  
5 adjustment is included in this last amendment so in  
6 addition to the model senior center budget it  
7 includes COLA and it includes... and it also includes  
8 increase to minimum wage.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: And how does that  
10 affect other general funding for programmatic  
11 enhancements?

12 DONNA CORRADO: It's separate and apart  
13 by... I mean it's a separate line item, but program  
14 enhancements are, are... will be added to the budgets  
15 as well so it's one big amendment for the term of the  
16 contract so it's accounted for in the out years as  
17 well.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: So, is there... is  
19 there a concern... so, it's, it's... so, they're separate  
20 and apart so there wouldn't be a concern that senior  
21 centers would use their discretion to then use a bulk  
22 of the money to increase salaries considering the  
23 fact that many senior centers haven't seen an  
24 increase in such a long time.

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2 SASHA FISHMON: Most of the money is used  
3 to increase salaries and it's in addition to cost of  
4 living adjustment and minimum wage increases which  
5 are also being done at the same time but it's in  
6 addition.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: I appreciate that.

8 DONNA CORRADO: So, so it's a proposal,  
9 right, so they come back and if money is intended for  
10 personnel which we, we, we refer to as PS cost that  
11 PS has to go up and then programming also has to be  
12 enriched. So, we look at how it's being spent in  
13 addition to the COLA and the minimum wage increases  
14 as well.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Perfect, alright,  
16 thank you so much.

17 DONNA CORRADO: You're welcome.

18 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: We've also been joined  
19 by Council Member Williams and he has questions for  
20 the Commissioner.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you Madam  
22 Chair and thank you Commissioner. We have some issues  
23 that are very specific to my district that I want to  
24 bring up so if that... if that's alright and I think...  
25 because I know we've had some conversations about it

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2 already, we were... had some active adults who are  
3 ready to shut some stuff down in City Hall but based  
4 on some conversations we've had the contingent is, is  
5 smaller but here in any case so I just want to ask  
6 them to stand in the back please, all of the seniors  
7 from the Midwood Senior Center in my district and a  
8 full disclosure because I had to disclose it on the  
9 record, Midwood Senior Center is a great senior  
10 center with a great participant who happens to be my  
11 mother, Patricia Williams whose here as well and they  
12 were pretty rowdy, they were about to cause some,  
13 some, some rowdiness but we, we have some concerns  
14 with Midwood Senior Center. For the past year, my  
15 office has been trying to work with Millennium who  
16 is, is the administrator of the senior center and the  
17 synagogue, you know the story to find a new place, we  
18 have been unable to do that and there's a lot of  
19 finger pointing but because we haven't been able to  
20 do that these seniors are going to be without a home  
21 in just a few days and the response has been to send  
22 them to another location, they're not happy about  
23 that because they feel they're going to be split up  
24 and the relationships that they've garnered are going  
25 to be broken up and that that will slow down the

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2 process of finding the new senior center within the  
3 vicinity which they live because most of them are...  
4 most of the locations are several miles away. We've  
5 tried to find a number of locations and we've had  
6 problems with that and so I'd like you to respond to  
7 that. There was something that happened this morning  
8 that was concerning, as those members who decided to  
9 still come during the bus some DFTA people showed up  
10 trying to get them to go to another senior center,  
11 seemed a little intimidating and so I just wanted to  
12 be concerned... I just wanted to ask the first  
13 question, why was DFTA showing up this morning when  
14 they never have shown up before?

15 DONNA CORRADO: Right, so we've had DFTA  
16 staff for a number of days trying to coordinate at my  
17 request a smooth transition during this, you know  
18 unfortunate time that they are being evicted from  
19 their senior center, no... you know no body's fault  
20 here, no finger blaming, that was a court order that  
21 they have to leave the synagogue, unable to establish  
22 a new site before the eviction so in... to make this  
23 transition as smooth as possible we asked for the  
24 other centers to come in and transport seniors to  
25 centers and do basically open houses for the day so

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2 that they can senior center shop and it just so  
3 happened that our staff was there this morning and a  
4 bus was intending to take seniors to a different  
5 center to do a visit and then unbeknownst to our  
6 program officer who was there a bus showed up to take  
7 the seniors to the city hall so the buses, you know  
8 they thought we're going to be filled up to go to a  
9 center for a site visit was being... another bus showed  
10 up in their place and, and they were going to city  
11 hall so, the, the program officer was just a little  
12 surprised and I'm sure she was encouraging people to  
13 go on the bus that would take them to an alternate  
14 site so that's just unfortunate timing, no... I'm  
15 sorry, it wasn't intentional or intended, we're  
16 trying... [cross-talk]

17 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: My... [cross-  
18 talk]

19 DONNA CORRADO: ...we're trying to, to have  
20 a very smooth transition, at least that's what I'm  
21 being told, I wasn't there.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Ma, you, you...  
23 no... [cross-talk]

24 DONNA CORRADO: I don't know, that, that...  
25 [cross-talk]

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: You all... you  
3 all wonder where I get it from. You... okay ma... [cross-  
4 talk]

5 DONNA CORRADO: Okay, so I wasn't there  
6 so if you wanted... you know if you want to refute that  
7 that's, that's what I was told this morning because  
8 when I got the message that DFTA staff were there  
9 trying to discourage seniors from coming to city hall  
10 I, I kind of scratched my head as well saying why  
11 would we do that because seniors can certainly do  
12 whatever it is that they want to do, it's a... you know  
13 we encourage them to be advocates and, and to do that  
14 so I apologize on behalf of my staff if they  
15 discouraged you from doing what you need to do and  
16 that won't happen again.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you very  
18 much. Apparently, there's differing opinions I'm sure  
19 I'll... [cross-talk]

20 DONNA CORRADO: Okay... [cross-talk]

21 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: ...hear about it  
22 later but if we can also get to the meat of what's  
23 going on and how we're going to ensure that not just  
24 these seniors but all of the seniors who are... [cross-  
25 talk]

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2 DONNA CORRADO: Right... [cross-talk]

3 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: ...home now will  
4 remain together even after... while we're trying to  
5 find a new location, one and of course trying to find  
6 a location very quickly.

7 DONNA CORRADO: Right, so we're working  
8 with Millennium who's the sponsor on identifying a  
9 new location and obviously we have one under review  
10 currently and we're working with them, we have to do  
11 our due diligence that's our job so we will be  
12 working with them and doing what we hope buying some  
13 time with their contract by keeping it open but what  
14 we can't do is if there's no services at a center and  
15 there's no site we can't necessarily continue to pay  
16 staff in perpetuity so we have to have a, a, a  
17 reasonable time line in which to find a new location  
18 and in the interim and as you know if they find a  
19 location it needs to get not only DFTA approval but  
20 also needs to be renovated and make the  
21 accommodations for a senior center so we're, we're...  
22 [cross-talk]

23 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Is it... [cross-  
24 talk]

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2 DONNA CORRADO: ...in the... we're in the  
3 process of doing that, we have identified a site,  
4 it's not ideal in my opinion but it may have to be  
5 good enough and, and hopefully it will work out, I'm  
6 not going to say one way or the other because it's  
7 still under review and we'll try to expedite that  
8 renovation with a... with a, a new landlord but if it  
9 doesn't work out we're going to have to continue  
10 looking.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Just to put two  
12 things on the record, I appreciate the indulgence.  
13 One with the contract because that was something that  
14 was strange, we, we've been trying to work this out  
15 for a year, we haven't and then Millennium found out  
16 they wouldn't have the contract because they couldn't  
17 find the space that we feel we didn't get help to get  
18 and so we're saying now that they will maintain the  
19 contract and funding for at least a couple of months  
20 I guess to try to resolve this and the second are we  
21 going to be able to... if we need to if we find a  
22 temporary location that makes sense have assistance  
23 so that they remain together during the time period?

24 DONNA CORRADO: So, we have seven other  
25 senior centers and options, none of them are ideal,

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2 they're not your... not the center but they're in, in  
3 somewhat close proximity and if seniors want to go  
4 together to those centers I'm sure they'll be happy  
5 to accommodate them but that's the senior's choice.  
6 Many, many seniors may feel comfortable in one center  
7 and not another center but there are other options  
8 and we're really bending over backwards working with  
9 those other senior centers to make those  
10 accommodations and many of those other centers are  
11 significantly underutilized and would welcome new  
12 seniors whether in a group or individually, so we do  
13 have other, other options. So, setting up a temporary  
14 location I'm not sure what you mean by that.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Well, well... so  
16 definitely... [cross-talk]

17 DONNA CORRADO: I mean in, in... [cross-  
18 talk]

19 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: ...I mean if we  
20 find a... [cross-talk]

21 DONNA CORRADO: ...the proposed... the  
22 proposal... [cross-talk]

23 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: ...temporary...  
24 [cross-talk]

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2 DONNA CORRADO: ...was to set up a  
3 temporary location in an existing senior center which  
4 is a great idea, right, so if, if they want to all  
5 travel to a particular center that's fine but that  
6 does not mean that they're going to get double the  
7 funding.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: So, I, I don't  
9 want to take up time, so I just want to get the, the  
10 second part of it, I'll speak to you about this part  
11 offline because some of those areas that you  
12 mentioned are far away... [cross-talk]

13 DONNA CORRADO: Right... [cross-talk]

14 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: ...and so that  
15 does cause a problem and we're trying to keep them  
16 together so I'll talk to you about that after I just  
17 want to... [cross-talk]

18 DONNA CORRADO: Okay... [cross-talk]

19 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: ...make sure I  
20 had it on the record but in terms of the contract for  
21 Millennium that it sounds like they'll be able to  
22 extend at least for a little while... [cross-talk]

23 DONNA CORRADO: For, for a little...  
24 [cross-talk]

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COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: ...while we're working... [cross-talk]

DONNA CORRADO: ...while.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay, what's a... [cross-talk]

DONNA CORRADO: For a little while...

[cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: ...do we have a time frame?

DONNA CORRADO: I have... we're, we're working with that on a month to month basis.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: On a month to month... [cross-talk]

DONNA CORRADO: But I can... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: ...basis... [cross-talk]

DONNA CORRADO: ...I can't do that very long if there's no... if there's no physical location we can't necessarily pay them for a... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: I, I appreciate it I just want to put on the record that there's no physical location, we've been trying to get that for a year so I don't want folks to be punished for something that is not their fault and frankly I'm not

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2 sure that DFTA has helped expedite at, at this time  
3 so I just want to make sure that's on the record, I  
4 want to thank the Chair for indulging me at this time  
5 and thank my seniors and active adults, I apologize,  
6 my active adults for coming out today and for my  
7 mother showing exactly where I get my fire from,  
8 thank you so much.

9 DONNA CORRADO: Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you Council  
11 Member Williams and thank you Miss Williams and we're  
12 going to work very hard, I mean we should all work  
13 together, if my office could be of any assistance  
14 we'll, we'll work together and make sure that the  
15 seniors are taken care of and Council Member  
16 Williams, I am surprised that you didn't talk to me  
17 about this early on, Miss Williams you got to tell  
18 him, he didn't tell me that he was having a problem  
19 in his district, no so at least we could of started  
20 working on it so we got to remind him, he's got to  
21 take care of home, home base and we've been joined by  
22 Council Member Dromm, welcome, our Finance Committee  
23 Chair who fought very hard for our budget this year,  
24 thank you and we were just before you got here we  
25 were talking to the Commissioner about getting the

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2 money in the February plan so that we can take care  
3 of the food part that wasn't taken care of in the  
4 model budget so we got to continue to work on that.  
5 Thank you. And we've also been joined by Council  
6 Member Deutsch. Did anyone of you have questions for  
7 the Commissioner on the... okay. I think I have one  
8 final question about the, the pay parody in the  
9 senior center. So, what is the, the salary range of  
10 Directors at the centers that's operating under DFTA?

11 DONNA CORRADO: So, that's a loaded  
12 question because the last time I... [cross-talk]

13 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: I mean it... [cross-  
14 talk]

15 DONNA CORRADO: I dare to... [cross-talk]

16 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: I mean you have like a  
17 guide... a guideline for them and also for Directors  
18 who are bilingual that... take that into consideration,  
19 I mean... [cross-talk]

20 DONNA CORRADO: So... [cross-talk]]

21 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: ...does, does DFTA put  
22 out at least the guidelines for them?

23 DONNA CORRADO: No, but what...when there's  
24 a, a proposal for example about a particular staff, a  
25 program manager for example and it comes in too low

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2 we will work with the agency and let them know that  
3 we're not necessarily pleased with that, that it's  
4 not equitable related to other senior centers and we  
5 think that they should raise that salary so we're  
6 doing it that way. Each individual sponsor sets their  
7 own salary scales and some of them have union  
8 contracts, so it gets a little complicated but, you  
9 know my own personal philosophy is that we should be  
10 paying everybody more money, so we try to push the  
11 envelope where we can.

12 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Well that's why we  
13 were, you know we wanted to push for more funding and  
14 when... [cross-talk]

15 DONNA CORRADO: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

16 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: ...I heard that the  
17 model budget process only 21 million I think the...  
18 probably could be much more than that to really have  
19 a fully functioning well funded center, I think it's  
20 probably going to go beyond that 21 million dollars  
21 and then on the... when you were talking about the COLA  
22 increase and the minimum increase that was in the  
23 amendment but that did not include the food service  
24 worker, right?

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2 DONNA CORRADO: It did if it was a COLA  
3 and if it was a minimum wage increase, yes it did.

4 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So, the two... so the  
5 food service worker got the minimum wage increase and  
6 COLA?

7 DONNA CORRADO: Correct, amended into the  
8 budget and in out years as well, right? So, is it  
9 effective in January?

10 [off mic dialogue]

11 DONNA CORRADO: So, it's not retroactive  
12 to 2017, July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017 but since it's a three-year  
13 contract in the out years and next year the... it was...  
14 the minimum wage was amended commencing January 1<sup>st</sup>,  
15 2019 but it's in this particular amendment.

16 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So, they are going to...  
17 [cross-talk]

18 DONNA CORRADO: Get an increase... [cross-  
19 talk]

20 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Retro, retroactive?

21 DONNA CORRADO: No, it's not retroactive.

22 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So, they're supposed  
23 to get... [cross-talk]

24 DONNA CORRADO: So, the minimum wage...  
25 [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON CHIN: ...it starting January  
of 2017?

DONNA CORRADO: The minimum wage is going  
up January 2019.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So, what about the  
COLA though?

DONNA CORRADO: The... [cross-talk]

SASHA FISHMON: [off mic dialogue] not  
used to talking into microphones...

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: The COLA will start in  
July?

SASHA FISHMON: In July 2018.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: I, I just wanted to  
see if the, the food service worker at the senior  
center are they going to be getting any kind of  
increase?

SASHA FISHMON: Yes, yes, they did, they  
got... have got them both COLA and minimum wage  
increases.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: But they will get it  
starting... [cross-talk]

SASHA FISHMON: The COLA... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: ...in... [cross-talk]

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2 SASHA FISHMON: ...is effective in July,  
3 the minimum wage increases are out... the next minimum  
4 wage increase is effective January 1<sup>st</sup> of... January  
5 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019, yes.

6 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So, they will get it  
7 in July for the COLA... [cross-talk]

8 SASHA FISHMON: Yes... [cross-talk]

9 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: ...and January for the  
10 minimum wage increase, well right now they didn't get  
11 anything because they were not included in the model  
12 budget?

13 SASHA FISHMON: They have gotten COLA and  
14 minimum wage increases this current fiscal year as  
15 well and fiscal year '17, it's an ongoing process  
16 that started with going up from... to 12 dollars then  
17 to 13.50 then 15 dollars, two percent on each salary  
18 in between so they've been continuously getting it...  
19 them as, as well as other center staff and... so they..  
20 that is... just happens to be included in the same  
21 amendment but that has not been to DFTA's model  
22 budget.

23 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Okay, so they still  
24 didn't get anything in the model budget, but they  
25

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2 will get for... whatever they are entitled to in terms  
3 of COLA and minimum wage... [cross-talk]

4 DONNA CORRADO: Yes, correct... [cross-  
5 talk]

6 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: ...increase... okay.  
7 Alright, do we have... Council Member Deutsch.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: I don't have a  
9 question, I'll... I just have a few comments. First of  
10 all, I want to thank our Chair for her advocacy over  
11 the budgets, fighting for our senior population, it's  
12 really an honor for me to work with our Chair and  
13 the... our... my colleagues in the Aging Committee over  
14 the last four and a half years and I want to thank  
15 you Commissioner for everything that you do and I  
16 just want to remind our senior population that today  
17 is the first day of the summer season and I also  
18 remind I don't... I actually don't have to remind you  
19 because today I think it was in the 80's but we're  
20 going to have a hot summer so just to remind you to  
21 look out for those cooling centers and if you don't  
22 have a air conditioner at home please do not hesitate  
23 to reach out to your elected officials, use their  
24 offices at a... as a cooling center and as well as, you  
25 know keep... staying cool throughout the summer so

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2 unfortunately every year we hear... we, we hear of some  
3 tragedies so it's important to, to remind you of that  
4 and always check on your neighbors, your elderly and  
5 disabled neighbors. And in addition to that I'm proud  
6 that I was able to advocate with the Parks Department  
7 to put Mobi Mats at the beach front along with my  
8 colleague, Council Member Mark Treyger to have Mobi  
9 Mats throughout the Coney Island Beach so this way  
10 the... a Mobi Mat is a hard plastic tarp that lays from  
11 the Boardwalk to the water so... because it's very  
12 difficult for seniors, people with disabilities or  
13 even a parent pushing a carriage... a stroller to get  
14 in, in... to get to the beach to the water front and  
15 enjoy the beautiful outdoors and the recreation at  
16 the space so if you have a Mobi Mat it gives you easy  
17 access to go from the Boardwalk to, to the water so  
18 please utilize it, you have them throughout the Coney  
19 Island Beach so if you ever want to go out and just  
20 cool off don't hesitate to come into our district and  
21 if you need transportation don't hesitate to contact  
22 your local elected official to get transportation  
23 wherever you live to, to go enjoy the beautiful  
24 outdoors. So, once again I want to thank our Chair  
25 for everything that she does and all my colleagues,

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2 the members of the committee and most importantly I  
3 want to thank all our seniors who take of their time  
4 to come out to these hearings and let their voices be  
5 heard and you have loud voices so thank you all very  
6 much.

7 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you Council  
8 Member Deutsch and thank you for your service to your  
9 seniors in your district, they're lucky in your  
10 district, they get to go to a lot of trips.  
11 Commissioner.

12 DONNA CORRADO: Yep... [cross-talk]

13 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: One last question is  
14 that in this whole process with, you know getting  
15 the, the, the food service, the meals correctly, are  
16 you... can we get DFTA to commit to engaging the  
17 provider as early as possible because with the model  
18 budget they were sort of brought in and even some of  
19 the centers was brought in very, very... [cross-talk]

20 DONNA CORRADO: Absolutely... [cross-talk]

21 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: ...late?

22 DONNA CORRADO: Absolutely and they've,  
23 they've... we've already brought them in, in the  
24 initial phases of this analysis and we will continue  
25 to do that, you have my word.

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2 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Because we wanted to  
3 get this process out as soon as possible.

4 [off mic dialogue]

5 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Oh, okay, I know I  
6 want to let you go so that you can go watch your dad...  
7 well your dad is not performing, your uncle is at a  
8 senior center, they're putting on a show for the  
9 Commissioner. So, in terms of the, the model budget  
10 process are all the senior centers, the 249 are they  
11 all done, have you... have they done all the amendments  
12 for them?

13 DONNA CORRADO: We have an update, so,  
14 thus far all the model budget proposals have been  
15 received from providers, I mean the providers gave  
16 them back to DFTA and of those budgets 176 have been  
17 approved by DFTA and 50 others are in the final  
18 negotiations and revisions and while negotiations are  
19 finalized if disseminated all model budgets for  
20 fiscal year '18 and '19 and as we mentioned these  
21 amendments have been combined with the 12 month  
22 contract extensions, cost of living adjustments and  
23 minimum wage adjustments and DFTA is working to  
24 expedite the registration so that as many as possible  
25 will be registered by July 31<sup>st</sup> when the last invoice

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2 for fiscal year '18 is due and regardless of when  
3 each contract registration is completed all budgets  
4 will be retroactive to July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017 so that the  
5 full ten million can be utilized by the centers and I  
6 want to give a special shout out for our Associate  
7 Commissioner of Budgets, Sasha Fishmon who's been  
8 working nights and weekends to do this with her staff  
9 and they've been working non-stop so we really need  
10 to give them a, a round of applause I think.

11 [applause]

12 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: This way... this way, no  
13 noise.

14 DONNA CORRADO: And I mean that  
15 literally.

16 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you. Thank you,  
17 Sasha. So, out of all those centers how many centers  
18 did request funding to be used for other purposes, do  
19 we have any idea?

20 SASHA FISHMON: Only a few requested as  
21 far as we know to use the funding for food and maybe  
22 kitchen staff and some requested to use funding for  
23 emergency one time needs, some requested more funding  
24 to be used for personnel then, then programming than  
25 we originally allocated, we've approved most of the

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2 increases, all we to make changes to the proposal so  
3 that that budget can cover both the increases for  
4 food staff as well as the model budget portion.

5 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Okay, well I just  
6 wanted to thank you again Commissioner for your  
7 partnership and going forward we will continue to  
8 make sure that every year is the year of the senior,  
9 okay, so thank you for being here and I hope you  
10 enjoy your show and say hello to your dad for us. So,  
11 we're going to call up the, the next panel; Andrea  
12 Cianfrani from Live On New York; Kevin Douglas from  
13 UNH, United Neighborhood Houses; and Michelle Jackson  
14 from Human Service Counsel and Chris Widelo from  
15 AARP. You may begin.

16 MICHELLE JACKSON: Good morning  
17 Chairperson Chin and the Committee on Aging, thank  
18 you so much for allowing us the opportunity to  
19 testify about the DFTA model budget. My name is  
20 Michelle Jackson, I'm the Deputy Director of the  
21 Human Services Council, a membership association  
22 comprised of about 170 human service organizations  
23 and coalitions across New York City. I am not a DFTA  
24 expert, you'll hear from people much smarter than me  
25 about the model budget and senior centers today. I'm

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2 opening things up to just provide a little bit of  
3 context about the sector overall and how all the  
4 coalitions have come together to really advocate for  
5 increased funding and process changes to make the  
6 human services sector stronger and better able to  
7 deliver quality services. So, decades of underfunding  
8 have really stripped the sector of the ability to  
9 provide quality services and have left a lot of  
10 sectors... the sectors really wondering about their  
11 financial stability and as you've already explained  
12 today that is definitely true of the senior centers  
13 and other senior providers. About 20 percent of human  
14 service providers in New York City are insolvent  
15 based on their books and over half report that they  
16 don't believe that they'll be able to meet need...  
17 their increasing needs in the future years and so  
18 we've done a lot of work in this area and have come  
19 together which with a... what... a group called we... the  
20 Human Services Advancement Strategy Group that's  
21 comprised of a lot of the major coalitions in New  
22 York City including Live On and United Neighborhood  
23 Houses and others and... to really come together and  
24 talk about how we need to lift up the sector and how  
25 we got to this place is not a new... it's not a new

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2 problem it's really decades of underfunding kind of  
3 process changes that actually start really at the RFP  
4 process. The RFPs are not designed with providers at  
5 the table and... who have an expertise to talk about  
6 what's working on the ground and what isn't, what are  
7 real rates for food or other costs and how those  
8 costs go up. So, a lot of RFPs are coming out and  
9 have come out that don't cover the full cost of  
10 services and nonprofits are asked to make up the  
11 difference. The next step is there's rising costs, a  
12 lot of these contracts last for five or... five years  
13 or longer and often it'll last beyond the duration of  
14 the contract initially because it takes a while for  
15 the RFPs to go out, so providers are asked to extend  
16 their contracts and rent and other things in New York  
17 City go up every year and the contracts don't reflect  
18 and there's not really a vehicle for those increased  
19 costs to be reflected. So, by, by the time you get to  
20 the end of a contract term the gap in funding has  
21 just increased then you add process issues like late,  
22 late registration, the comptrollers recent report,  
23 report, you know shows how bad late contracting and  
24 late pay... which therefor means late payments is in  
25 the human services sector. This creates real cash

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2 flow issues for nonprofits and also it, it can, can  
3 cost them money too, right, so some of them take out  
4 lines of credit and things like that, that. Both the  
5 administration and the council have really tackled  
6 these issues, I want to make sure we point that out.  
7 DFTA actually had a round table with some of our  
8 providers yesterday to talk about contracting issues  
9 and how they can... how we can be... better understand  
10 each other and partner together and the nonprofit  
11 resiliency committee has made a lot of really great  
12 enrolls into process changes and changing including  
13 making a RFP collaboration or more collaborative  
14 which is really important, I think needs to be noted  
15 and of course with the council's support last year we  
16 were able to obtain the model budget as well as COLA  
17 and increase in direct funding. So, those are all  
18 really important steps but we are seeing...  
19 particularly the model budget we were excited to see  
20 that this was an opportunity to address contract by  
21 contract, every contract is uniquely underfunded but  
22 I can guarantee that they're all underfunded and so  
23 the model budget was an opportunity to address that  
24 and to get at some of these chronic underfunding  
25 issues and as Council Member Chin has already pointed

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2 out there are issues with the DFTA model budget as  
3 well as others. I'd like to point that ACS's model  
4 budget providers and coalition groups have said that  
5 that one went pretty well and so I think there's a  
6 model that could be used in future years if this is  
7 something that continues. We did not advocate in this  
8 budget year for more increased funding for model  
9 budget because the process was convoluted and didn't  
10 feel that it addressed a lot of the chronic issues  
11 that you'll hear from other providers today who can  
12 definitely give a little bit more color to that. So,  
13 going forward first to address the late registration  
14 issue we're asking for a SWAT team to be put into the  
15 city agencies to clean up all these delays in, in  
16 registration, we're end... nearing the end of the year.  
17 This also includes all of the amendments for the COLA  
18 and direct and model budgets, we have about ten days  
19 left in, in this fiscal, fiscal year and a lot of  
20 those registrations while... now that they're sitting  
21 either with the comptroller's office or the city  
22 agencies are not registered yet and that needs to be  
23 fixed. We're also looking for in this funding year  
24 although it was not included in the budget while I it  
25 was included in the council, council's response

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2 though was we need to see an increase in funding for  
3 occupancy cost, for fringe rates for providers, we  
4 need to continue to see increases in indirect rates  
5 and then there needs to be some of these larger  
6 systemic issues that are addressed through process  
7 changes at, at the city agencies to make sure that  
8 late payments and RFPs that go out in future years  
9 are actually meeting the needs of, of providers and  
10 the people that they serve. Thank you.

11 ANDREA CIANFRANI: Good morning. I'm  
12 Andrea Cianfrani, I'm the Director of Public Policy  
13 at Live on New York. Live on New York's members  
14 provide community-based services to over 300,000  
15 older adults... older New Yorkers annually many of them  
16 are here today and you'll hear from a little later.  
17 The senior centers we know are the keystone to DFTA's  
18 senior service portfolio. As mentioned and we want to  
19 be clear and you mentioned it Council Member Chin in  
20 your opening remarks, senior centers are not just  
21 nice to have. Research shows they are the link to  
22 combatting social isolation, improving health and  
23 keeping older adults engaged in communities that's  
24 why we were very encouraged and applauded Mayor De  
25 Blasio, Commissioner Corrado and her team and the

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2 city council led by Council Member Chin and the Aging  
3 Committee last year for the 23-million-dollar  
4 investment including funding for model senior center  
5 budgets. Again, you'll hear directly from some  
6 providers with context on this process, but we just  
7 wanted to highlight a few of the overarching issues  
8 and, and highlights from, from the past year. You  
9 heard from the DFTA team earlier today that as of  
10 today that FY '18 funding again very close to the  
11 end, end of the fiscal year is not fully registered  
12 into all the senior center contracts so that's a...  
13 that's a growing concern. Providers were not engaged  
14 in the process until late March so that's a little  
15 bit, you know understandable with the timeline and  
16 again all of that said we do really do want to, to  
17 recognize the work of the DFTA fiscal staff to make  
18 this happen in this condensed timeline. It's a lot of  
19 work and we do want to help get that money out the  
20 door, but you know again they're not registered yet  
21 and, and we're really concerned about the programs  
22 getting the funding. We did talk about the 249 senior  
23 centers that were analyzed, there were 26 out of  
24 those 249 that did not receive any funding because  
25 they were deemed at or above the model budget amount.

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2 We have... it's... based on our understanding there is  
3 some other centers that are outside of that universe,  
4 there are about 38 programs that were not even  
5 evaluated in the model budget process which we have  
6 some concerns and questions about, some of those, I  
7 believe about 11 centers were formerly discretionary  
8 funded centers that were brought into the DFTA  
9 portfolio, so we have some concerns about them being  
10 evaluated included in this process. As noted today,  
11 the funding was to be only directed in two specific  
12 areas, important areas but directed to direct  
13 staffing and programming. Despite the fact... we talked  
14 a lot about meals. Despite the fact that senior  
15 centers... senior centers served over 7.6 million  
16 years... meals last year with the majority of seniors  
17 using these programs saying this food makes up over  
18 half of their nutritional intake, half of their daily  
19 intake of food providers could not use the funding  
20 for meals or kitchen staff which has caused disparity  
21 among programs and these are some of the most highly  
22 valued and important members of the senior center  
23 team so again that was a concern. This also means  
24 that no centers even those who received funding  
25 received anything for rent and facility costs,

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2 transportation, OTPS, technology or any other costs  
3 required to run a senior center. I also did want to  
4 note that the city has promised an additional ten  
5 million for this process by 2021. All of that being  
6 said we have some recommendations again to work  
7 together with both the council and DFTA and the city  
8 on this, we, we see this as a great first step and  
9 really want to be collaborative in this effort  
10 because we know the value of investing in senior  
11 services. So, I'll just run through those very  
12 quickly. The first is to expedite the additional ten  
13 million promised, as soon as possible in FY '19 with  
14 the RFP for senior centers anticipated in the near  
15 future and we see no reason for the city to hold this  
16 funding and we'd really like to get that out before  
17 2021. You, you mentioned it earlier in your remarks  
18 and I know that the city is working on the meal study  
19 so in the meantime we are very encouraged that the  
20 city is working on looking at meals, they're a core  
21 component of senior centers including home delivered  
22 meals as well but we know that the city is spending  
23 20 percent below the national average on senior meals  
24 which means they're paying for four out of every five  
25 meals and providers are picking up the cost. We did

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2 ask for funding and advocate for funding and are more  
3 than a meal campaign in FY '19 which in itself was  
4 just a first step to support providers while we wait  
5 for the work of the meals program to continue. So, we  
6 really would like to focus and, and encourage funding  
7 added as soon as possible to support higher cost of  
8 providing meals including Kosher, Halal and other  
9 culturally competent meals. Third, we're encouraged  
10 to hear again about the meal study but we really hope  
11 that the city will continue to engage providers  
12 directly in this process, providers have a lot of  
13 context and can really provide a lot of input to help  
14 improve these programs and make sure they're  
15 effective and so we're having really meaningful  
16 conversations about the funding that will come  
17 because there is a budget implication of what will  
18 come from that study and we want to make sure that  
19 it's reflective of the true needs of the system today  
20 and in the future. Fourth, in general fully fund  
21 senior center contracts. We talked about the other  
22 items that were not included in the model budget and  
23 those really need to be addressed and looked at as we  
24 move forward. Fifth, we'd really like to make sure  
25 that the city is taking a look at those programs that

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2 were excluded from the model budget process entirely,  
3 those... many of those were centers that are held to  
4 same standards and if the purpose to... was to right  
5 size contracts and promote fairness we'd like to make  
6 sure that those are addressed accordingly. Finally,  
7 we'd like to echo Michelle's comments on supporting  
8 the agency wide investments in the human services  
9 sector. We really believe, and we see it every day  
10 that our aging services system is at it's best when  
11 professionals are using the people power to serve  
12 older New Yorkers instead of navigating contractual  
13 bureaucracy or, or wondering when the funding is  
14 coming in for the work that they've already done. So,  
15 we are... support HSC's asks for the investments in the  
16 human services sector and we work... really look  
17 forward to working with the city on, on those issues.  
18 I wanted to close with one of the quotes from our  
19 postcard campaign, we ran a postcard campaign this  
20 year where we had thousands of seniors who sent  
21 postcards to many of your offices, I'm sure you got  
22 stacks of them as well as to the Mayor to really talk  
23 about why New York is a great place to age and we  
24 believe that and we look forward to working with you  
25 all to make it better and I think this quote really

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2 kind of sums up... most of the seniors that responded  
3 to that campaign talked about their senior center and  
4 that's why we're here today and this is just one that  
5 really I think illustrates the value of what we're  
6 investing in when we talk about investing in senior  
7 services. A senior from Speaker Johnson's district  
8 who lives at Project Find said this, "Centers should  
9 be opened so that seniors can have a meal, meet other  
10 people including seniors. The centers offer internet  
11 access to look for jobs and activities to keep up  
12 with friends. The center also offers a sense of  
13 community and belonging, psychologically interacting  
14 with other people helps stave off depression and  
15 suicide. Centers offer opportunity to keep learning,  
16 keep the brain active, making new little brain cells.  
17 It is important to have a safe, clean place to go  
18 just like boys and girls clubs. Seniors are just big  
19 kids essentially" and we really believe that older  
20 New Yorkers are driving the city forward and we want  
21 to continue to support senior services and we look  
22 forward to working with you all to do that to make  
23 New York a better place to age. Thank you.

24 KEVIN DOUGLAS: Ditto. So, good  
25 afternoon... or good morning I, I suppose. My name is

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2 Kevin Douglas, I am the Co-Director of Policy and  
3 Advocacy at United Neighborhood Houses of New York. I  
4 want to first thank and recognize you Chair Chin for  
5 your fearless leadership for many years for the older  
6 adults in New York City that led to actually the  
7 investment that we saw in the model budget for older  
8 adults and obviously I also want to thank Council  
9 Member Ayala for your leadership on the geriatric  
10 mental health initiative, Chair Dromm for the Finance  
11 Committee leadership that led to the inclusion of  
12 home delivered meals in partnership with Chin and  
13 also Council Member Treyger who's been a real  
14 supporter for older adults and immigrants here in the  
15 city. So, overall, we're very pleased that the  
16 administration made a really historic commitment to  
17 investing in the senior center system and DFTA at  
18 large because it hasn't been done in a real way for a  
19 long time and so I want to preface everything else  
20 I'm about to say with that acknowledgement and  
21 appreciation to the city. There were a number of  
22 problems with the model budget process that we think  
23 are important to discuss so that when we move forward  
24 we can do things in a more strategic way. The first  
25 really relates to the question that Council Member

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2 Rosenthal asked about when DFTA embarked in this  
3 process did they do an analysis of what the entire  
4 need was going to be for the model budget process,  
5 what those resources were going to be and then what  
6 that meant given that there's only ten million  
7 dollars on the table. I share her surprise that the  
8 total amount of need to right size the system was the  
9 exact amount that the city had committed to the  
10 process. I think really what we expected was the ten  
11 million dollar investment was not enough to right  
12 size a senior center system with 250 roughly  
13 providers that... serving thousands of older adults  
14 every year so out of the gateway knew that we were  
15 sort of behind the eight ball that there wasn't going  
16 to be enough to actually do a model budget process  
17 and I think the model budget terminology actually led  
18 to some of the frustration in the field because the  
19 term model budget implies a good standard, right,  
20 like we're doing a comprehensive look at all of the  
21 elements of a program and creating a budget that  
22 should be emulated and is fully funded and instead  
23 what we saw was a very peace meal approach that was  
24 underfunded and slow without transparency. So, what  
25 we actually wound up with were enhancements to senior

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2 centers which are welcome and appreciated as you  
3 mentioned but it wasn't a model budget and so that  
4 was the first thing that we were really concerned  
5 about. We echo Andrea and, and Michelle's requests to  
6 expedite the additional ten million dollars because  
7 we know those are at a minimum required to do this  
8 right, we'd ask for it to be done in this fiscal year  
9 and we're disappointed it was not. We still call for  
10 the administration to invest those funds. Moving past  
11 the sort of question of money because, you know we  
12 always want more resources and the city's going to be  
13 able to commit, the process itself was significantly  
14 flawed. There was a real lack of transparency  
15 throughout this process, neither providers or the  
16 associations that represent them were engaged over  
17 the course of the year in a meaningful way to get  
18 feedback with these universal dollars which is the  
19 best thing we can do, and it really wasn't until  
20 March as, as the Commissioner testified to that  
21 providers were told how much money they had and what  
22 the eligible uses of those would be. So, we were  
23 three quarters of the way into the fiscal year before  
24 anyone really knew what was happening. DFTA talked  
25 about this sort of five buckets of providers, we

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2 still don't know what the methodology was, we don't  
3 know what the funding levels are and as you attested  
4 to with the, the human settlement report providers  
5 don't understand why they got the amount of money  
6 they got particularly if they have more than one  
7 center or discrepancy between the two. So, we're  
8 really disappointed that there wasn't a back and  
9 forth with the field to really understand this and as  
10 Michelle talked about in the ACS preventative budget...  
11 models budget there was over ten meetings with  
12 providers to understand what their needs were and how  
13 to use the funding effectively as... in addition with  
14 several of us up here, the Human Services Advancement  
15 Strategy Group to talk about the process. So,  
16 assuming that we get the additional ten million  
17 dollars the city's committed we'd really encourage  
18 DFTA to work more closely with both you and providers  
19 and associations to really make sure the funding is  
20 used correctly. Moving forward beyond sort of  
21 process, beyond sort transparency was the actual lack  
22 of flexibility. So, we knew because there wasn't  
23 enough money that they weren't going to be able to do  
24 all elements of the model budget and it was really  
25 frustrating that the food costs were left out. We've

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2 heard from the minute this became public that food  
3 costs were not going to be allowed our providers were  
4 like up in arms and like wanting us to be up in arms  
5 with the city about this because that was what they  
6 thought was going to be one of the most significant  
7 needs for their centers. You had asked how many  
8 providers actually requested to do food costs and,  
9 and the city correctly answered only a few, what they  
10 didn't say is that only a few did because when the  
11 process was launched they were told that they  
12 couldn't ask for it and it wasn't until around April  
13 where they issued a clarification in partnership with  
14 OMB to say actually you can ask for it but only if  
15 you meet this like super high threshold and the  
16 threshold was only for new expanded programming or  
17 significant changes not to rectify existing underpaid  
18 staff or underfunded meal programs so I just want to  
19 note that there was a great much greater need for the  
20 investment in food services than was reflected by  
21 formal requests because of the signals that were sent  
22 to providers. So, the last thing I'm, I'm just really  
23 going to echo Michelle as well, part... this is not all  
24 on DFTA, right, so there are significant problems  
25 with human services contracts across the board so it

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2 was very hard to do a model process on top of a  
3 system that was not working to begin with so we  
4 really echo the call to make sure that the city is  
5 doing a better job to bring all contracts up to fair  
6 and direct rates to at least 15 percent bringing the  
7 fringe rate up at... to at least 37 percent making sure  
8 there's increases for occupancy and insurance and  
9 when you have that baseline then you can build a  
10 model budget on top of that presuming that you  
11 actually put the full amount of money in there. So,  
12 again, you know this is sort of a, a critical  
13 analysis of, of the process which we think is  
14 important but just... I'll end with sort of a note of  
15 appreciation again because this doesn't negate the  
16 fact that the dollars were in the end of the day an  
17 enhancement that the centers did make use of and are  
18 grateful for and this is really coming from the  
19 spirit of let's figure out how we do this better  
20 moving forward, building on examples that ACS and  
21 other city agencies have took so thank you.

22 CHRIS WIDELO: Good morning Councilwoman  
23 Chin, Chairwoman, thank you for the opportunity to  
24 speak today. My name is Chris Widelo, I'm the  
25 Associate State Director for AARP here in New York

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2 and thank you to the members of the council that are  
3 also here to hear our testimony. I represent 800,000  
4 AARP members that are in the five boroughs and I'm  
5 really happy that a number of our members and  
6 volunteers were able to join me here today for an  
7 important discussion about model senior centers. I  
8 guess the bad part about going last is everybody took  
9 all the good stuff. So, I certainly want to echo all  
10 the points made by my colleagues to my left and this  
11 is a... you know really appreciate that OMB and DFTA  
12 and, and the administration have taken this approach  
13 but we need to get it right and also make sure that,  
14 you know that these costs that senior centers are  
15 forced to, you know deal with on a regular basis are,  
16 are part of this conversation otherwise down the road  
17 we are going to have some, some serious problems and  
18 I just... I'll sort of reiterate some stats that you've  
19 heard from me a number of times and, you know  
20 expediting that next ten million dollars is, is  
21 incredibly important. In a budget that rivals that  
22 of, you know 36 other states in size it's hard to  
23 believe that the DFTA budget is less a half percent...  
24 half a percent and we know a few things, right and I,  
25 I know Council Member Vallone is fond of this that

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2 every day and it will happen for the next ten years,  
3 10,000 people are going to turn 65 years of age in  
4 this country, this is a huge group of folks that is..  
5 that are going to be needing services that are  
6 provided by DFTA, now that's not just here in New  
7 York City that's across the country but you can kind  
8 of figure out what that looks like, it's something  
9 around like... I believe... I did some math it's ballpark  
10 about 500 people a day here in New York. So, one..  
11 nearly one third of residents in the five boroughs  
12 are the... are of age 50 or older and that group is  
13 expected to grow by nearly 20 percent by the year  
14 2040 and that growth rate for the 65 plus group..  
15 segment is projected to be even more dramatic, a  
16 whopping 40 percent increase and these folks... it..  
17 right... if, if senior centers are struggling now with  
18 the current budget or will have issues with this  
19 model budget that problem is going to be exacerbated  
20 and we have to get ahead of it and get it right and  
21 so I think we appreciate all the well intentions  
22 moving forward with this process but I think my  
23 colleagues have really laid it out that we... there are  
24 some things that are left out that are incredibly  
25 important and need to be addressed and... you know at

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2 the... at the very least we need to, you know expedite  
3 the funding so our centers can do what they need to  
4 do and I, I think I'll keep my comments short because  
5 I think it's important that we hear from some of the  
6 providers that are on the frontline and handle these  
7 issues every day and understand what this means from  
8 their perspective. So, thank you to the council for  
9 this opportunity.

10 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yes, thank you so much  
11 for your testimony. We've been joined by Council  
12 Member Treyger and Council Member Vallone. All your  
13 recommendations are great, and we really have to get  
14 this process started early with the, the, the food...  
15 the meal part that was not included. I, I didn't hear  
16 from the Commissioner the ten million or the 20  
17 million it was just a down payment, that was not the  
18 amount that we were talking about. I think to really  
19 create a model budget for our senior centers you're  
20 talking about maybe adding 100 million dollars, so we  
21 just have to keep on pushing and fighting that  
22 whatever the administration put in is great but it's  
23 only a down payment and it is an investment because  
24 our seniors, the seniors that go to the senior  
25 centers they're so much stronger and healthier and

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2 seniors are part of our future. We didn't even talk  
3 about all the contributions that they make to keep  
4 this city running and going, the volunteer service so  
5 it's not just that they need help, they are also  
6 providing the help, they're the caregivers so I think  
7 this investment we just got to keep on pushing and,  
8 and make sure that everyone feels proud if you get to  
9 be a senior it's a blessing, right, so I'm so proud  
10 to be a senior so we got to keep on doing that and  
11 make sure that the administration gets the point and  
12 we're going to push O, OMB to work with the providers  
13 to really look at this meal program and hopefully we  
14 can get some money in the February plan before the  
15 next budget. So, thank you to this panel and thank  
16 you for all the great advocacy that you do, thank  
17 you. We're going to call up the next panel; Katie  
18 Foley from SelfHelp Community Services; Poa Ling Ng  
19 from CBC Open Door Senior Center; Jonah Gensler from  
20 Sunnyside Community Services; and Aaron Rooney from  
21 Stanley M. Isaac Neighborhood Center. I just want to  
22 thank all the AARP members for joining us this  
23 morning, it's great to see you all the red. Okay,  
24 please start.

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2 KATIE FOLEY: Hello, my name is Katie  
3 Foley and I am the Director of... [cross-talk]

4 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Make sure you press  
5 the button, see the red... [cross-talk]

6 KATIE FOLEY: It is red, is this... is this  
7 better? Okay. Hello, my name is Katie Foley, I'm the  
8 Director of Public Affairs at SelfHelp Community  
9 Services. Thank you again to Committee Chair Chin and  
10 the members of the Committee for the opportunity to  
11 testify about the city's model budget process for  
12 DFTA contracted senior centers. Four of SelfHelp's  
13 five senior centers were included in this process and  
14 my remarks today are focused on our experiences with  
15 those four contracts. First, we want to commend the  
16 Department for the Aging, the OMB and the City  
17 Council for the ongoing commitment to senior centers  
18 since the beginning of the model budget process. This  
19 significant funding for the city's, city's senior  
20 centers has been and will continue to be a critical  
21 step towards stabilizing one of the core programs  
22 that supports older New Yorkers including many  
23 immigrant seniors. Overall, our experience with the  
24 model budget process has been positive. The  
25 additional funding has allowed for numerous upgrades

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2 for SelfHelp's senior centers. First the investment  
3 enabled us to raise salaries for program staff, which  
4 was much needed and much appreciated. The investment  
5 in the model budget for staff helped us address  
6 ongoing concerns related to salary parity that we  
7 heard about today and that has been a concern for  
8 SelfHelp and we know other providers and advocates  
9 since the case management salaries were raised. We've  
10 now seen the impact of increased salaries in the  
11 aging network and we're grateful for this important  
12 step. Second, the additional funding allows us to  
13 expand programming options. And third, the  
14 flexibility provided in the fiscal '18 budget offered  
15 the opportunity to upgrade centers through one-time  
16 purchases, such as repairing the entryway at one  
17 center, purchasing computers and a large kitchen  
18 equipment for other centers. We are finding that some  
19 spending especially related to building repairs is  
20 difficult to achieve in the short timeframe since we  
21 received the funds, but we are optimistic that DFTA's  
22 flexibility will extend to allowing some of the  
23 projects approved for fiscal '18 to be completed  
24 within fiscal year '19. And our relationship with  
25 DFTA is stronger because of our work together in

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2 implementing the model budget process, and we want to  
3 thank them for that collaborative relationship. In  
4 addition to the success of the model budget process,  
5 we want to share some of the challenges that we've  
6 faced. We remain concerned that other costs beyond  
7 programming and related salaries were not included in  
8 this process particularly food and kitchen staff,  
9 both, both of which are significant costs for senior  
10 centers. We hope that the allocations in the  
11 subsequent years will focus on food, rent, OTPS and  
12 other associated costs. SelfHelp supports the request  
13 for 12.1 million for congregate and home delivered  
14 meals to be baselined to increase the reimbursement  
15 rates. We also appreciate the 2.8 million in onetime  
16 funding for home delivered meals and we hope to see  
17 continued investment in food and meals in the future.  
18 This funding is particularly important to increase  
19 the reimbursement rate for culturally competent meals  
20 such as Kosher or Halal, both of which currently  
21 result in a deficit to nonprofits upon each meal  
22 provided, despite cultural competency being a  
23 requirement of DFTA. Given our interactions to date,  
24 we believe that DFTA will continue to engage with  
25 providers on necessary budget modifications

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2 considering the dynamic needs of each center.

3 SelfHelp is requesting that the remaining ten million  
4 that's being committed to this process be allocated  
5 in fiscal year '20 instead of fiscal year '21.

6 Expediting the ten million in funding by fiscal year  
7 '20 as opposed to the proposed three years roll out  
8 will have a very positive impact on the operations of  
9 our programs. Allocating these funds is especially  
10 important with the projected next RFP for senior  
11 centers to be released in calendar year 2020. Thank  
12 you for the opportunity to testify today. On behalf  
13 of the 20,000 clients that we serve, I am grateful  
14 for the Council's support on our many important  
15 programs.

16 PO LING NG: Good morning Chairperson

17 Margaret Chin and members of the City Council. First  
18 of all, on behalf of the Chinese American Planning  
19 Council Open Door really say thank you, thank you all  
20 the city council really strongly support the seniors  
21 but one thing I'm really excited because our lovely  
22 Chairperson Margaret Chin always said that, you know  
23 the year of the 2018 is the year of the senior and  
24 also give us the additional money and the ten million  
25 dollars for model budget for seniors. Our seniors are

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2 very, very excited, we're thinking about Open Door is  
3 really under the Department for the Aging 46 years  
4 already, we have the huge run senior services, we  
5 provide a variety of great services for the low  
6 income, for the immigrant, for... you know and, and  
7 Chinese Asian American seniors, everyone happy, happy  
8 our services. So, I am thinking about this additional  
9 money Open Door maybe get a... some money, not a lot  
10 but unfortunately, we cannot even get one dime of the  
11 budget so that's why all our seniors really  
12 disappointed. We are not jealous the people that get  
13 more money, but we are really disappointed we don't  
14 get any money because we service, provide very good  
15 quantity and quality services for the senior but a  
16 lot of people don't understand how we run the very  
17 good program. The one thing, we thank you the  
18 Department for the Aging we don't complain, they  
19 should understand we run the great program it's not  
20 that easy. The one thing we concerning about the  
21 staffing, about the services about the money and  
22 whatever but the point is I'm talking about the  
23 facilities, the... because right now we are a very  
24 happy to be located at the 168 Grand Street, very  
25 good facility but unfortunately they not allow us to

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2 put the kitchen over there, we should... the other  
3 side... even they said that the congregate meal that's  
4 the really congregate meal, no, congregate and the  
5 catering should be over there but the Department for  
6 the Aging only gives us the congregate. I get a  
7 sample sometimes the holiday is different, once it's...  
8 our kitchen area, they closed the door, but our  
9 center should kick the door open, where we cook the  
10 food, where do we cook the food, you think we close  
11 the door, don't provide the food for the senior  
12 definitely unfair. So, we tried to call the, the...  
13 catering food from the restaurant but the Department  
14 for the Aging did not approve the money, they said  
15 that, you have the kitchen, why don't you cook by  
16 yourself, why you call catering the food from the  
17 restaurant, my friend could you help me, you're so  
18 smart I'm not smart, could you help me if the kitchen  
19 closed how we cook the food, we, we don't want to  
20 keep our senior hungry so as the director I got all  
21 the, the lunch from the restaurant, that is count for  
22 the catering so the Department for the Aging not  
23 approve, where I get the money to feed the senior,  
24 that's the one problem. The second year before the  
25 Department for the Aging title five gave us nine

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2 senior aid to help our kitchen staff, the custodian,  
3 and doorman a lot of things but right not the  
4 Department for the Aging title five they said that  
5 this isn't a budget problem, they only gave us one  
6 senior aid even not one senior aid, only 12 hours a  
7 rate, so that's why we are facing about a staff  
8 shortage. The Department for the Aging said that they  
9 cannot give us money to hire the staff whatever we  
10 want so right now I have some staff how do they get  
11 paid? They said that, that's the Directors problem.  
12 You should fundraise the money to pay the staff, my  
13 goodness you are thinking about the director is a  
14 super lady, yeah, if you don't give us the money for  
15 the catering you don't give us enough money for the  
16 staff and only said that the Directors should resolve  
17 the problem. The third, we had our staff most of them  
18 on salary only \$13.50 but I tell you true my... some  
19 kitchen staff work in my center 42 years, you know  
20 how much money she gets only \$13.50, the new person  
21 come in they get the \$13.50 so that's why they always  
22 come up to me Po Ling that's unfair, why we were over  
23 there 42 years still get the \$13.50 but the people..  
24 new person come in get the \$13.50 so this is the  
25 other problem. The third thing that our staff should

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2 be bilingual, bi-cultural and also very smart, how to  
3 write the manual, how to know... how to control the  
4 budget, how to market, how to do this thing and that  
5 thing and also the timing because the... I talk too  
6 much but I really thank your city council person,  
7 you're so smart. Yesterday I talked with one Asian  
8 Americans... they even want me to go over there, one  
9 person asked me, Po Ling could you share with me why  
10 you that successful, sharing with me your secret, I  
11 said that and then they say you also have a good  
12 heart good mind not only a good heart, you should  
13 know how to plan, how to get the money, how to do  
14 anything and return and provide very good services  
15 not only that and good mouth too so that's why today  
16 I had the good mouth and raising my voice and not  
17 everyone know I am not a super lady so that's why  
18 payers give me more money, don't isolate us, that's  
19 really, really insulting of the Open Door, all our  
20 staff we already have over utilization but the money,  
21 nothing so I tell you too our lovely Chair you know  
22 Open Door very well, when you visit Open Door you see  
23 how upset their face not only that our staff too  
24 because I... if you want me sharing with you all the

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2 things I will but the other thing talking about meals  
3 on wheels... [cross-talk]

4 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Well Po Ling I...  
5 [cross-talk]

6 PO LING NG: ...another thing I know you  
7 know very well... [cross-talk]

8 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yeah, I think for... I  
9 thank you... [cross-talk]

10 PO LING NG: ...we have to pay... [cross-  
11 talk]

12 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: ...for the... your  
13 testimony and I think it's important to hear directly  
14 from the center and that's why we have talked to DFTA  
15 about the 26 centers that did not get a dime from  
16 this model budget, so we are going to make sure that  
17 there are enhancements and supplemental funding that  
18 can help you, okay? So, we will follow up... [cross-  
19 talk]

20 PO LING NG: Thank you... [cross-talk]

21 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: ...on your case.  
22 Alright, next.

23 PO LING NG: Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you Po Ling.  
25

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2 JONAH GENSLER: Good afternoon. I'm Jonah  
3 Gensler, I'm the Associate Executive Director for  
4 Community Services at Sunnyside Community Services  
5 and I speak on behalf of our organization who serves  
6 14,000 individuals throughout Sunnyside and all of  
7 Western Queens and our Executive Judy Zangwill. So,  
8 we're one of the organizations that did receive  
9 funds, we received about a two percent increase. I  
10 agree with the remarks that this is in fact an  
11 enhancement, it is not a model budget and so we do  
12 have concerns. At the same time, we're grateful,  
13 we're grateful for a number of things that come from  
14 both council such as geriatric mental health which  
15 has really completed our center, thank you Councilman  
16 Ayala. And we're grateful for indirect rates that  
17 have increased for recognition of minimum wage  
18 increase needs and for this model budget. Our  
19 organization has a wide spectrum of services not just  
20 a senior center, we've got case management and  
21 geriatric mental health, we... caregiving supports on  
22 multiple fronts, social adult day, home care and  
23 it's... we're proud of this integrated service platform  
24 and our senior center... our senior center is, is our,  
25 our shining program that everybody knows. Two percent

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2 is not a model budget. So, when the model budget was  
3 in the works we waited and when months went by we  
4 waited and by March we figured this is going to be  
5 really good, we were underwhelmed. The instructions  
6 that we got said to us this is for programs... direct  
7 program staff and we said great and they gave  
8 examples including a bookkeeper, so we said surely  
9 our cook and our assistant cook who serve 200 people  
10 a day with a team of volunteers under them surely,  
11 they will be included in this, the instructions  
12 didn't say otherwise. So, we put forward that, that  
13 was soundly rejected. We asked for a logic... we, we  
14 asked for explanation, we didn't get that. Now I will  
15 note that finally we were able to work behind the  
16 scenes and achieve what we wanted which is simply to  
17 move funds into those two positions which are  
18 critical but making a deal on the side is not the way  
19 to do business and not having that documented and not  
20 having the trust of what will happen a year from now  
21 when the other monies kick in and how those resources  
22 will be used leaves us feeling uneasy. So, when we  
23 look at partnership with DFTA and we do see  
24 leadership and program officers who are good  
25 thoughtful people but engaged in a process that

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2 doesn't make sense. We ask how can we be partners  
3 with council and with DFTA to build a true model  
4 budget and model true leadership for the seniors that  
5 so much deserve every ounce, every inch of our best  
6 planning and thoughts and work to deliver the  
7 services that they need and deserve. Thank you all  
8 for your attention and your continued support of  
9 seniors throughout New York City.

10 AARON ROONEY: Good afternoon, thank  
11 you. I'd like to thank the City Council and Committee  
12 Chair Chin for the opportunity to testify today. My  
13 name is Aaron Rooney, I'm the Clinical Director at  
14 Stanley Isaacs Neighborhood Center, I oversee our  
15 case management program and clinical services there.  
16 I also thank the Council and DFTA for the investment  
17 in the model budget process, it's a promising first  
18 step in bringing these vital programs up to date. The  
19 additional funding allocated to our center will  
20 assist us to partially fund a new social work staff,  
21 this is crucial, we see over 700 clients a year for  
22 case assistance and case management, we need to build  
23 towards a staffing pattern that can meet these  
24 complex needs. There do remain some issues with the  
25 model budget that are not addressed as we've been

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2 talking about today. Some of these areas include the  
3 food costs being excluded from the model budget,  
4 providing nutritious meals is at the core of the  
5 services we provide to senior centers and older  
6 adults to keep them healthy and safely in the  
7 community. The model budget does not address the  
8 increased cost for food, it also doesn't include  
9 additional cost it would take to provide therapeutic  
10 meals and meals that are tailored to individuals  
11 based on actual medical needs and individual needs,  
12 that's something that we care about and somewhere  
13 where I think we should be going in the future. It  
14 also is noted the model budget does not include  
15 enough for staff wage increases as we've been  
16 discussing, the ability to keep wages high or, or at  
17 a higher rate is a direct impact on the quality of  
18 services that we can provide and how long we can keep  
19 good staff. I think senior centers are a great entry  
20 level position for a lot of social workers and for  
21 case workers but keeping good staff for long term is,  
22 is a big issue that we see at our center as well. The  
23 COLA increases alone aren't enough... aren't going to  
24 be enough to do that. In addition, it's been  
25 difficult to ascertain where each center stands in

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2 the process, it's known many negotiations are  
3 complete others are not, with the end of the fiscal  
4 year approaching or is here which requires more  
5 transparency in this process would be... benefit  
6 everyone. the model budget has been instrumental in  
7 helping senior centers catch up to where they should  
8 be in 2018 but has thus far fallen short of preparing  
9 senior centers for the future. As we grow older  
10 together additional thought and investment to senior  
11 centers will be essential to assure these vital  
12 institutions can meet the unique changing and growing  
13 needs of older adults in New York City. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you very much  
15 for takin the time today to come and give testimony.  
16 We're going to continue to work with DFTA to make  
17 sure that we get the funding out the door and make  
18 sure that we get more money for our centers. So,  
19 thank you. We're going to call up the, the next  
20 panel. Ariel Savransky from UJA Federation; Rachel  
21 Sherrow from City Meals on Wheels; Carlyn Cowen from  
22 C... Chinese American Planning Council; Jeanette Estima  
23 from FPWA; Molly Krakowski from JASA, okay Rimas  
24 Jasin from PSS, oh okay I think they submitted  
25 testimony on the record, okay thank you.

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2 ARIEL SAVRANSKY: Good afternoon

3 Chairperson Chin and Council Member Ayala. My name is  
4 Ariel Savransky and I am an Advocacy and Policy  
5 Advisor at UJA Federation of New York. On behalf of  
6 UJA our network of nonprofit partners and those we  
7 serve thank you for the opportunity to testify today  
8 on senior center model budget process, processes.

9 Also thank you for your continued and necessary  
10 support for Department for the Aging core services  
11 and initiatives in the FY '19 budget however  
12 outstanding issues prompted by the senior center  
13 model, model budget process remains. We would like to  
14 submit the following recommendations on request and  
15 many of these have been discussed previously so I  
16 will just quickly echo what my colleagues who came  
17 before me had said. So, after a month of delays DFTA  
18 is in the process of dispersing the first ten-  
19 million-dollar installment. This funding meant for FY  
20 2018 and still not fully registered across all senior  
21 center contracts can only be used for direct  
22 staffing, programming and consulting. We appreciate  
23 efforts to right size senior center budgets  
24 particularly when it will bolster staff salaries and  
25 help implement high quality programming. However as

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2 was discussed previously these funds do not cover the  
3 full cost of services specifically meals and kitchen  
4 staff, transportation, technology, rent, utilities  
5 and insurance and other miscellaneous costs.

6 Additionally, we had advocated for the expedited  
7 release of the remaining ten million dollars that was  
8 promised through the model budget and an expanded  
9 definition for what this funding can be used for.

10 This request was not considered in the FY 2019  
11 enacted budget. The next projected RFP for senior  
12 centers is set to be released in 2020 and it is  
13 extremely important that these funds are committed  
14 prior to this RFP so that future awards account for  
15 the full cost of running a successful senior center.

16 I'm just going to briefly touch on senior center  
17 meals. So, while food insecurity rates among most New  
18 Yorkers have actually declined in recent years, rates  
19 among seniors have increased. As UJA Federation's  
20 network of nonprofit partners provides vital food  
21 services and supports to all New Yorkers throughout  
22 the five boroughs this is something that we're  
23 extremely concerned with. Access to culturally  
24 appropriate meals for older adults at senior centers  
25 is paramount to this effort. While we appreciate the

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2 2.8 million dollars that was included in one-time  
3 funding for home delivered meals in the FY '19  
4 budget, this is well short of the 12.1 million  
5 dollars we had requested and does not apply to meals  
6 actually served at senior centers which further  
7 widens the gap between reimbursement and cost of  
8 meals in the centers. Lastly. I would just like to  
9 echo what some of my colleagues have said about the  
10 nonprofit sector as a whole as representatives of the  
11 human services sector we are disappointed that the FY  
12 '19 budget did not contain the needed investments  
13 that we had advocate, advocated for. Organizations  
14 accept city contracts at great risk to their  
15 stability, but they do so because they are mission  
16 driven and want to ensure that New Yorkers receive  
17 quality services. Nonprofits cannot continue to  
18 operate without crucial investments in systems  
19 changes and this budget does not include the  
20 commitments necessary for a robust human services  
21 delivery network. Thank you for the opportunity to  
22 testify and we look forward to working together  
23 throughout this year.

24 RACHEL SHERROW: Thank you Chair Chin for  
25 your consistent and dogged support of aging services

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2 and for the opportunity to speak. My name is Rachel  
3 Sherrow, I'm the Associate Executive Director at  
4 Citymeals on Wheels. I do not want to be redundant, I  
5 want to start by saying that I love the timer so  
6 anytime you want to bring that back, anytime. So, I'm  
7 going to be really quick. The model senior... the  
8 senior center model budget did not include food,  
9 everybody keeps talking about it, it's one of the  
10 largest if not the largest components of senior  
11 centers. So, without that I, I'm just not sure how  
12 we're going to get to a number that is realistic and  
13 viable for our centers. As my colleagues keep  
14 reiterating the contracts are not fully funded to  
15 begin with so not having this as part of it is  
16 really... makes it much more difficult. The other piece  
17 I just want to again emphasize is that we really need  
18 to expedite these ten million dollars to happen in  
19 this current fiscal year, we cannot wait another  
20 year. We just have to keep fighting for more, but we  
21 really need to push this out for this fiscal year.  
22 So, thank you very much for your time and have a  
23 wonderful summer.

24 CARLYN COWEN: Good morning, my name is  
25 Carlyn Cowen, I'm the Chief Policy and Public Affairs

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2 Officer at the Chinese American Planning Council.

3 Thank you very much Chair Chin for the opportunity to

4 testify and for your persistent leadership on these

5 issues. My colleague Po Ling Ng has already said many

6 of the issues better than I possibly could have so

7 I'll keep this brief, so we can all get to lunch but

8 I do want to highlight a couple of recommendations

9 that CPC has to improve the model budget process

10 overall. In the next phase we urge the increased

11 transparency and providers role in implementation,

12 had providers been more intensely involved in the

13 creation of the model budget and implementation we

14 would have been able to say that our kitchen and

15 security colleagues are essential to the operations

16 and that they need to be included, that the model

17 budget cannot be successful without fully including

18 meals and so we hope to have the opportunity to weigh

19 in on these issues as providers are the ones that are

20 delivering the services on a daily basis and we

21 understand most how to make sure that all of the

22 pieces are addressed throughout the model budget

23 process. The next recommendation we have is making

24 sure that we address the insufficient funding and

25 exclusion on some of the centers. CPC has three

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2 senior services centers two of which were included in  
3 the process. We urge the expedition of additional  
4 funding by 2020 for providers since we have not  
5 necessarily received all of the first wave and the  
6 price of food, of transportation, of rent, of other  
7 OTPS expenses continue to increase it's urgent that  
8 we expedite this funding in order for it to be  
9 meaningful to providers. Thank you so much for your  
10 work on this, for your persistence on this and for  
11 the opportunity to testify today.

12 JEANETTE ESTIMA: Good morning, my name  
13 is Jeanette Estima and I'm a Senior Policy Analyst at  
14 FPWA. Thank you, Chairperson Chin and the members of  
15 the committee, for the opportunity to testify today.  
16 Last year Mayor De Blasio acknowledged the importance  
17 of senior centers as community resources by  
18 committing to the creation of this model budget and  
19 while we're grateful to the administration and of  
20 course to the council under your leadership, we're  
21 disappointed in the process and ultimately with a  
22 model budget that still leaves most centers with  
23 large funding gaps. However, we are pleased to hear  
24 that the administration has heard some of these  
25 concerns and is planning to meet with advocates to

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2 discuss these following issues. Regarding the  
3 process, it could have been improved in two important  
4 ways, first by increasing the transparency in the  
5 process and of course by being finalized in time to  
6 be implemented in FY '18 which was the year in which  
7 the initial funding was allocated. As DFTA and OMB  
8 created a methodology and considered the goals of the  
9 model budget providers were not consulted or invited  
10 to give feedback. We understand this to be in sharp  
11 contrast with the process at ACS which included focus  
12 groups with frontline staff and incorporated input  
13 from providers into its final recommendations. We  
14 believe that had providers been a part of the DFTA  
15 process the issues with the budget outlined today  
16 could have been avoided. The timing of the process  
17 has also been very slow as you've heard. Today with  
18 the close of FY '18 just days away many senior center  
19 contracts have not yet been amended and registered.  
20 While we recognize the hard work of the DFTA fiscal  
21 staff, we are still concerned about these delays and  
22 urge the administration to ensure that there is  
23 adequate capacity at DFTA to process these amendments  
24 promptly. Finally, the model budget is currently set  
25 to be implemented by FY '21 but this prolongs the

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2 time that some centers must function without the  
3 funding that DFTA itself has determined is needed for  
4 baseline operations and it puts them at a  
5 disadvantage when it comes time to compete for the  
6 next RFP set for 2020. Given the chronic underfunding  
7 of senior centers this funding really should be  
8 implemented immediately. As for the model budget  
9 itself the 20 million dollars allocated simply  
10 doesn't cover the full cost of baseline operations.  
11 Three major, major categories of senior center  
12 expenditures were not considered for correction  
13 through this process; food, occupancy cost, and OTPS.  
14 We know that senior centers play an important role in  
15 reducing food insecurity among older adults which is  
16 why meals are a fundamental service that they  
17 provide, a model budget that, that excludes meals is  
18 quite simply incomplete. Even the funding for direct  
19 staff as you've heard is incomplete because it  
20 doesn't include kitchen or meal staff leaving centers  
21 scrambling to supplement their budgets to pay for the  
22 full staffing costs. While we understand that these  
23 costs can vary widely they are clearly critical to  
24 operating a senior center and should be accounted for  
25 in the model budget in some way. Finally, as you know

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2 38 sites were wholly excluded from the process  
3 including 11 centers that were formally funded by  
4 discretionary dollars but have since been baselined  
5 and are subject to the same requirements and  
6 standards as other DFTA centers. While we understand  
7 that the social clubs and some other sites that offer  
8 only a few programs are not full-fledged senior  
9 centers and have very different budgets they should  
10 be evaluated as well in order to determine whether or  
11 not they are also funded at adequate levels. Therefor  
12 FPWA urges DFTA, OMB and the administration to  
13 reconsider this model budget to include all core  
14 expenses, this means additional funding to address  
15 insufficient reimbursement rates for meals, adequate  
16 staffing beyond program staff, and to include the  
17 centers that were excluded from the process and of  
18 course we also support our colleagues at HSC and the  
19 other advocates that have spoken today towards a... an  
20 overall investment in human service organizations  
21 around interactive fringe rates. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you, we've also  
23 been joined by Council Member Mathieu Eugene. Thank  
24 you to this panel to all your advocacy work. We  
25 totally agree with you so the, the next budget

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2 process has already started for next years... the... for  
3 FY '20, we're not going to give up and we're just not  
4 going to take what they gave us this year, I mean at  
5 the very end they put in 2.8 for home delivered meals  
6 because they had to do something but that's not  
7 enough, it's not sufficient and we want to make sure  
8 that we get this model budget, so called model budget  
9 down pact before the next request for proposal so  
10 that we can make sure that all our centers are  
11 adequately funded. So, we're going to continue to ask  
12 for your help and support with this process and we're  
13 going to engage OMB and DFTA continuously to make  
14 sure we get it right so thank you again for being  
15 here and, and for your great work. Is there anyone  
16 else that wanted to testify that didn't fill out a  
17 slip? Council Member Ayala, any... thank you for being  
18 here. Okay, so thank you everyone for coming today  
19 and our hearing is adjourned.

20 [gavel]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date

July 12, 2018